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ABSTRACT

This book provides the international reader with an overview of education for children and young persons in Sweden and indicates trends likely to develcp over the next 5 or 10 years. Its main concern is with municipal schooling, which today includes preschool education, the compulsory comprehensive schools for all children between the ages of 7 and 16, and upper secondary schools, as well as municipal adult education. Encompassing the goals, content, and organization of schools, the book is designed to describe Swedish schools and their activities in an impartial way. Problems concerning the organization of school work are described, especially as they affect 16- to 18-year-olds in upper secondary school. Main sections of the book describe school reforms from 1950 onwards, municipal responsibilities, state controls, forms of education, distinguishing characteristics of Swedish schooling, social benefits and pupil welfare, administration and allocation of costs, school staff, and educational trends. Appended are lists of state-run institutions of higher education and general and supplementary study programs in higher education. (RH)

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The Swedish School System

The Swedish School System

BRITTA STENHOLM

THE SWEDISH INSTITUTE

Britta Stenholm spent over twenty years as chief education officer of a municipality near Stockholm, prior to which she was a deputy chief education officer in Stockholm itself. Consequently she has acquired wide-ranging experience of the development and transformation of the school system throughout the entire period of reform from the early 1950s onwards.

Britta Stenholm has also served on several of the major government commissions on the school system, starting with the Secretariat of the 1946 Schools Commission. Since she retired in 1983, she has devoted part of her time to writing books about schools and school management, with special reference to the duties and responsibilities of municipal authorities.

The author alone is responsible for the opinions expressed in this book.

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Preface

Schools and education generally in Sweden have changed a great deal throughout this century, and especially during the past thirty or thirty-five years. In terms of outward organisation, these changes have had the effect of making the education system increasingly democratic. Everybody attends the same compulsory school. The great majority of youngsters go on to the integrated upper secondary school, which is designed for all-comers. Upper secondary school in turn can open the way to higher studies for anybody who is keen on continuing his or her education. Higher education has a very wide span but also lays the foundations of research and scientific specialisation. Finally, adults finding their basic education deficient can study the same courses as children and the rising generation.

This book is a situation report on the Swedish school system. It has a wide focus, taking in the goals, content and organisation of schooling. Its main concern is with municipal schooling, i.e. pre-school education, compulsory schooling and upper secondary schooling as well as municipal adult education. Very little is said concerning higher education, and other, non-municipal forms of adult education are not dealt with at all.

Swedish schools and their activities are impartially described and no secret is made of the fact that many problems are waiting to be solved as regards the organisation of school work, not least among the numerous rank and file of 16- to 18-year-olds in upper secondary school.

I hope this book will serve its purpose of providing the international reader with an overview of Swedish education for children and young persons in 1984 and the way in which it looks like developing over the next five or ten years.

Stockholm, November 1984
Britta Stenholm

School Reforms from 1950 onwards

Compulsory schooling—official inquiries

In about 1940, a widespread process of reform began to affect public (i.e. non-private) schooling in the western world. Laws were passed defining society's commitments and the duties of the individual. The duration of compulsory schooling was increased to eight or nine years. The organisation of schooling was improved and the very smallest schools were done away with. Teacher education was expanded and gradually revised. Opportunities of systematic vocational education were substantially increased.

In Sweden this process began later. The 1940s were a decade of official inquiries. At the beginning of the Second World War, the coalition Government then in power appointed the 1940 Schools Commission, an expert body which was instructed to investigate and put forward recommendations concerning both compulsory and voluntary schools, i.e. elementary school, lower secondary school, municipal girls' schools and upper secondary school in all their various guises. This inquiry occupied the whole of the 1940s and continued into the next decade, but its members were unable to arrive at unanimous recommendations on essential points.

After the war, the Social Democratic Government which had returned to power in 1945 therefore appointed a new government commission (the 1946 Schools Commission) to put forward rapid proposals primarily concerning compulsory schooling. A little over two years later this Commission presented its main report, *Guidelines for the Development of the Swedish School System* (SOU 1948:27), in which it proposed that the various forms of elementary school and lower secondary school should be superseded by a compulsory comprehensive school. Compulsory schooling was to be of nine years' duration, between the ages of 7 and 16. Upper secondary schooling was to last for three years and was to be based on completion of the compulsory nine-year schooling.

Experimental activities

The 1946 Schools Commission's proposals gave rise to a vehement debate and could not be employed in their entirety as the foundation of a parliamentary decision. An experimental scheme of nine-year comprehensive schooling, however, was already launched in 1949 on the initiative of the Commission. In 1950 the *Riksdag* (the Swedish Parliament) passed a resolution of principle for the introduction of a nine-year comprehensive school, the details of which, especially as regards the last three grades (senior level), were to be finalised after further experimentation.

Some of the basic elements of the new Swedish school were already introduced during the experimental period. The comprehensive school was to be a school for everybody. It was to provide all pupils with the instruction best conducive to the personal development of each individual into an independent member of society. School work was therefore to be individualised and examinations were to be abolished. Pupils were not to be streamed. Classes were to be kept together, partly for the sake of the pupils' social development. Senior level was to offer a free choice between various alternative studies. From the very outset, educational and vocational guidance occupied a prominent position and was supplemented by practical vocational orientation. Pupils with educational difficulties were to be given special help, as far as possible within their original classes. All Swedes were to receive at least a grounding in one foreign language, English. To begin with, this subject was made compulsory in grades 5, 6 and 7. Today it is compulsory from grade 4 at the latest up to and including grade 9. A new subject, civics, was introduced. This subject is now taught, in one form or another, throughout compulsory school and upper secondary school.

The experimental activities spread rapidly and were strongly supported by many municipalities, not least in rural areas, where the comprehensive school conferred equality of status with urban communities as regards opportunities of providing children with secondary schooling.

The introduction and rapid spread of the experimental school influenced the types of school existing previously. Elementary school was extended to include eight or nine grades. English was introduced as a teaching subject. Lower secondary schools were modified to follow on from six years' elementary schooling. Vocational education was now preceded by at least eight years' schooling. Upper secondary schooling was reduced from four years to three. In this way during the 1950s, schooling was steadily prolonged at the same time as the parallel types of school for young persons between the ages of 13 and 16 became less variegated and gradually began to be phased out. The rapid organisational growth of comprehensive schools, however, was one of the reasons why educational activities in schools changed very little and, when they eventually did begin to change, very slowly.

This was because lower secondary schools were adopted as the yardstick for the senior level of comprehensive school. Pupils and their parents wanted lower secondary schooling. Lower secondary school teachers were unaware of any educational objectives other than those of lower secondary school, which accordingly set the tone for teaching at senior level. The many elementary school teachers who came to serve together with lower secondary school staff had little if any further training to begin with. They were not capable of creating new teaching methods. And to make things worse, neither lower secondary school teachers nor elementary school teachers serving in the experimental schools received any appreciable assistance from the National Board of Education (see p. 106) or the teacher training colleges. The 1946 Schools Commission launched a broad-based further training scheme of high quality aimed at a renewal of pedagogics, but this scheme was not followed up by the National Board of Education. What happened instead was that the educational achievements of the experimental schools were compared with the results achieved in corresponding grades of lower secondary school. No allowance was made for the difference in educational objectives, nor was adequate allowance made for differences in recruitment. The experimental school was a nine-year compulsory school. But parents who had the resources and opportunity to do so sent their children to lower secondary school, with which they were familiar. They were afraid that their children would receive an inferior education if they stayed on in the experimental schools and were taught together with children having other educational objectives and less favourable educational backgrounds. It was not until 1956, with the establishment of the first school of education in Stockholm, that surveys were undertaken with the aim of comparing pupils in terms of personal and social development as well as in cognitive respects. Survey and control groups were formed on as equal terms as possible. The results of these surveys, published in about 1960, showed that pupils in the experimental schools did well in certain achievement tests, less well in others, but that in terms of social maturity and social knowledge they were superior to pupils attending lower secondary school.

For a long time, the objectives of the experimental activities decided on were a bone of contention. The policy decision was framed in such a way that those not desiring any educational reform in the nature of comprehensive schooling could argue that a school of this kind should only be allowed to supersede pre-existing schools if the educational achievements of experimental schools equalled those of lower secondary schools. The Government and a majority in the Riksdag took the policy decision to mean that the nine-year comprehensive school was to be introduced after suitable working routines and methods had been evolved during the experimental period. At the same time, elementary schools and lower secondary schools were to be abolished and other types of school were to be brought into line with a nine-year basic school.

The nine-year comprehensive school becomes law

After about ten years' experimentation, the time was ripe for a serious decision concerning the future organisation and development of Swedish schools. In the light of the experimental activities and in response to recommendations put forward by the 1957 Schools Commission, the Government introduced a bill which was passed by a virtually unanimous Riksdag in 1962. Sweden thus aquired its first Education Act. This Act defines the nine-year comprehensive school as a compulsory (elementary) school under municipal sponsorship. This school superseded the previous elementary school and lower secondary school, together with those portions of municipal girls' schooling and practical lower secondary schooling which came within the scope of nine-year compulsory schooling.

Further reforms

The 1962 Riksdag resolution was the first of a series of enactments setting up the educational system which Sweden has today, in the 1980s. Upper secondary schooling was reformed during the 1960s. The general gymnasium, with its three lines—Latin, Natural Sciences and Modern—was amalgamated with the technical gymnasium and commercial gymnasium to form a single three-year gymnasium based on complete compulsory comprehensive schooling. Portions of practical lower secondary schooling and municipal girls' schooling were converted into two-year continuation schools, which also followed on from compulsory comprehensive school. Vocational school, which had been heavily expanded in the 1950s, was also made to follow on from compulsory school, and was expanded at an accelerating rate.

Like compulsory school, the gymnasium, continuation school and vocational school were municipal schools under the sponsorship of the local education authority. By the end of the 1960s, most compulsory school pupils were going straight on to one of the three forms of subsequent schooling, while others did so after one or two years' gainful employment.

The heavy expansion of youth education made it necessary to provide adults with opportunities of acquiring the same general education and vocational training as the younger generation. Municipal authorities were therefore instructed towards the end of the 1960s to develop municipal adult education so as to provide single-subject courses or integrated daytime courses (comprising several subjects) corresponding to the senior level of compulsory school, continuation school, vocational school and gymnasium.

By the beginning of the 1970s it was time for the next reform of upper secondary schooling. The gymnasium, continuation school and vocational school were now amalgamated to form a single, integrated upper secondary school which, even today, has few counterparts in other countries.

Pre-school education, which in Sweden does not form an integral part of the educational system, has also undergone great changes. A heavy, State-subsidised expansion of municipal pre-school education was resolved on during the 1970s. Demand for pre-school places and leisure time centre places for younger school children was to be fully accommodated towards the mid-eighties. This expansion, however, is dependent on municipal initiative, and so far it has not proceeded at the intended rate. But the number of pre-school establishments has increased considerably and is still growing.

Higher education, finally, was transformed throughout this entire period, starting in the early 1960s. Teacher education came first. The former teacher training colleges were reconstituted as schools of education and admissions to them based on completion of continuation school or gymnasium. During the 1970s, specialised colleges of various sizes were amalgamated to form larger colleges offering a variety of educational opportunities. Universities and colleges have been divided into six higher education regions, with the universities of Stockholm, Uppsala, Linköping, Lund, Göteborg and Umeå constituting the principal units in their respective region. Universities and colleges are still State institutions, but their management has been decentralised and the labour market exerts considerable influence through the social partners (i.e. trade unions and employers' associations). The transformation of higher education has not yet been completed. For example, studies at small colleges outside the university cities need closer links with research and postgraduate studies than they have had so far.

Educational research and development

Under the auspices of the many schools commissions of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, a great deal of research work was undertaken concerning both types of school, reactions of pupils, parents and teachers, educational achievements, educational content and working methods. The results of this research were fed back into the organisation of the new schools and their curricula. Research played an important part in the design of school organisation, and there was great belief in the capacity of research for influencing school work.

Special State schools for experimentation and development were to be set up in conjunction with the schools of education. Prospective teachers were to be trained in an atmosphere of educational reform. An experimental school of this kind was in fact set up in Linköping, and municipal experimental and demonstration schools were also set up here and there.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the National Board of Education acquired a special advisory committee on educational research and development, whose duties were to include encouraging educational research, synthesising its findings and disseminating experience to school level.

The State experimental school conducted a series of important experiments, but it never acquired the role in teacher education that had been intended for it. The other experimental schools also failed to achieve the intended effects. For various reasons, their experiments tended to be of the greenhouse variety.

The advisory committee on educational research and development published annual summaries of all the educational research that went on, but these reports were insufficiently discussed and analysed in the schools. Of course, the experimentation and development conducted had certain results which among other things were fed back into the continuous revision of the curricula. But neither teacher education, in-service education and training, or the work of schools was sufficiently influenced to bring about a genuine renewal of educational methods.

In only too many cases, things went on in the same old way with teachers activating themselves more than their pupils. Municipal planning and direction of development work was also a rarity, in spite of a certain amount of effort being put into municipal experimental education areas during the 1960s.

This situation prompted a renewed examination of educational development work during the late 1970s, leading to a Riksdag resolution which, with effect from 1982, transferred a large proportion of national in-service education and training and development resources to the municipalities. In this way the latter have been made responsible for ensuring that experimentation and development work are conducted in schools. It is also a municipal responsibility to ensure that teachers apply for and obtain in-service education and training at higher education establishments geared to the municipal programme of experimentation and development. The aim in establishing development work at municipal level and making it the responsibility of those who are directly in charge of the work of schools is to encourage and accelerate educational development. The "municipalisation" of development work and teacher in-service education and training in 1982 undoubtedly led to a revitalisation of the educational debate in schools. It is too early to say whether this revitalisation will have any practical effect on school work, but there are great hopes that it will.

General responsibility for ensuring that educational research is undertaken in fields of essential importance to schools continues to rest with the National Board of Education, which also keeps schools continuously informed of scheduled, ongoing and concluded research projects.

Municipal Responsibilities

Types of school

Sponsorship

When the school reforms first started in about 1950, sponsorship for municipal schools as we know them today was divided between national and municipal authorities. The municipalities were the sponsors of elementary schools, continuation school* and vocational school, and also of practical lower secondary schools and municipal girls' schools. The State sponsored general high schools (with lower secondary schools and gymnasiums) as well as technical gymnasiums, while commercial gymnasiums could be privately or municipally sponsored. When the State lower secondary schools became unable to admit all applicants, municipal intermediate schools evolved having the same educational objectives and the same educational content. Parallel to the experimental nine-year comprehensive school during the 1950s, great changes also took place, first in elementary schooling and later on in lower secondary schools and upper secondary schooling as well. The end result was an almost impenetrable jungle of school organisation and sponsorship. In addition, there were a number of private schools, most of them vocational schools or commercial institutes. But there were also private schools offering the equivalent of the first four grades of elementary school, lower secondary school and gymnasiums. Finally, schools of agriculture, forestry and horticulture were often sponsored by the county councils, the directly elected parliamentary bodies at regional level primarily responsible for health and medical care.

The Riksdag resolution of 1962 establishing compulsory comprehensive schools marked the first step towards a simplification of the sponsorship situation. The municipalities now became sponsors not only of comprehensive schools but also of the three-year gymnasiums

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* The pre-reform continuation school was a compulsory addition to the seven-year and six-year elementary school, comprising either one day per week or a few weeks in the summer during one or two years, respectively.

Types of school and sponsorship

Compulsory school, comprising grades 1–9	municipal
Upper secondary school, 2-, 3- and 4-year lines together with specialised courses	municipal
Measures on behalf of 16- and 17-year-olds not attending school and lacking regular employment, "the youth guarantee" (co-ordinated with upper secondary schooling)	municipal
Adult education corresponding to the senior level of compulsory school and upper secondary school	municipal
Pre-school education and leisure time centres	municipal
National boarding schools (two in number), one of which is	private
Other independent boarding schools, compulsory schools and upper secondary schools	private
Special schools for arts and crafts	private

built up in conjunction with comprehensive schools (formerly experimental schools) and for other forms of post-compulsory schooling. Further policy decisions during the 1960s continued the process of simplification, at the same time as many small private schools disappeared or were taken over by municipal authorities and the municipalities also became the sponsors of adult upper secondary education.

Today compulsory comprehensive schools, integrated upper secondary schools and municipal adult education are all sponsored by municipal authorities, while the county councils remain the sponsors of upper secondary schools for agriculture, forestry and horticulture. The number of private schools has steadily diminished. One of the national boarding schools is privately sponsored, as are a few other small schools which also provide the equivalent of compulsory and upper secondary schooling. In addition, there are a few private—or, as they are now termed, independent—schools providing specialist studies mainly in the arts and crafts sector.

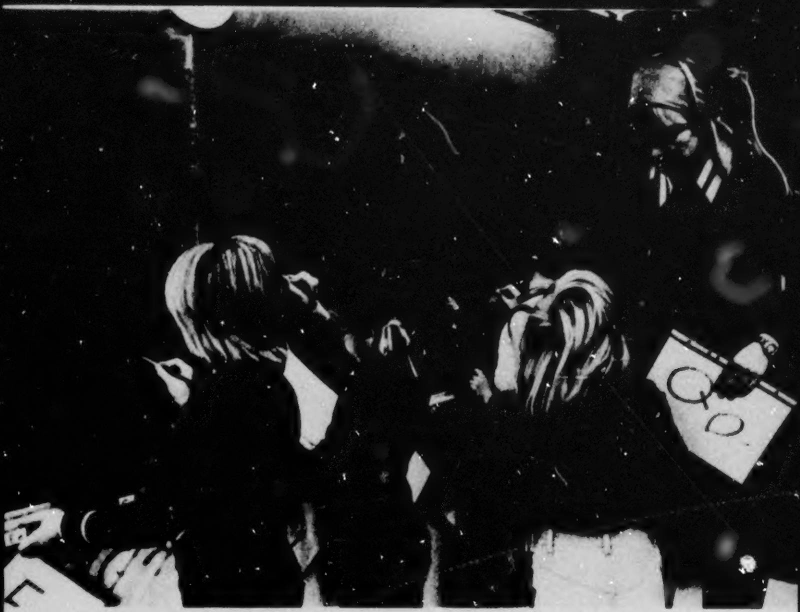
Summing up, then, the basic situation is that compulsory comprehensive schools, upper secondary schools and the corresponding adult education (i.e. both primary and secondary education) are all municipally sponsored. Municipal authorities are also the sponsors of pre-school institutions and leisure time centres (see also p. 38). Universities and colleges, on the other hand, have long been State-sponsored. The cost of municipal education, as we shall see later (p. 110), is shared between State and municipal authorities. Higher education is funded entirely by the State.

Municipal schools cater for the bulk of primary and secondary school pupils, viz. about 1.3 million between the ages of 7 and 18–19. Private, independent schools have only a few thousand pupils together, i.e. a minute proportion. A few independent schools in the larger towns and cities have a distinctive profile, for example because they admit children who have been unsuccessful in the frequently quite large municipal schools but do not lack educational aptitude. One consistent feature of these independent schools, with the exception of special schools for arts and crafts, is that they follow the compulsory school and upper secondary school curricula. In other words, they do not offer a different kind of education from the municipal schools. Like the national boarding schools, however, they offer a special educational environment for pupils who, for family reasons, are unable to live at home and attend day school. Or again, like a number of independent schools in the largest municipalities, they can offer a working method which suits a small group of pupils with particular problems. They can also cater for special groups with foreign backgrounds.

School policy and municipal responsibilities

Compulsory school age

The statutory duty of municipal authorities to provide pre-school, compulsory school or upper secondary school places for *all* children and young persons begins from the year of a child's sixth birthday. At this point, if not earlier, the municipality must admit children to pre-school education if their parents so desire. Schooling becomes compulsory from the year of a child's seventh birthday. This makes it the duty of the municipality to offer a place at school and the duty of parents to send their child to school, municipal or independent. Compulsory schooling may not be completed in any alternative way unless parents wish to teach their child at home and the school believes that they are capable of doing so. Extremely few parents exercise this option. Compulsory schooling ends when the child has completed the nine grades of compulsory school or reached the age of 16, but this does not



Children in Sweden do not begin their compulsory schooling until age 7. This late start is due to the country's great geographical distances and severe climate, which in earlier times made it difficult to bring together very young children for group activities.

mark the end of municipal responsibilites. For one thing the municipality has to make sure that young persons wishing to do so are able to attend upper secondary school. Secondly, the municipality has to ensure that 16- and 17-year-olds not attending school and not having any permanent employment are taken care of and found meaningful occupation which can arouse their interest in further studies or in gainful employment combined with education.

In the debate on school policy, these municipal tasks have been termed the total responsibility of municipalities on behalf of young persons. The question has been raised of extending compulsory schooling to the age of 18. This does not seem imminent, but most young persons continue their schooling in any case. The number of young persons not doing so is sufficiently small for schools to be able to get in touch with all of them and involve them in educational activity, apprenticeship or employment and short-cycle courses. On the other hand there is a great deal which speaks in favour of raising the maximum age limit for the municipal responsibility to 20 years.

Uniformity and equality of standards

Sweden is divided into about 280 municipalities which, of course, vary in structure and financial circumstances. Nevertheless, local education authorities are required to ensure that municipal schools are designed in such a way as to give the country a uniform school system and consistent educational standards in all municipalities. All children, wherever they live and go to school, must receive an education which will enable them to go on to upper secondary school and higher studies. This may seem a difficult task in a school system with no examinations, but comparative surveys of educational achievements in different schools and municipalities have revealed only very small inequalities of standards. Internationally speaking, differences of cognitive standards between individual schools in Sweden vary a great deal less than in any other country taking part in the surveys concerned (see also p. 130). Thus the wealthiest municipalities and the best-located schools do not achieve better results than poor municipalities and schools in sparsely populated areas. On the other hand, the achievements of individual pupils in each school vary a great deal. Uniformity and equality of standards are thus achieved where schools and municipalities are concerned, but the achievements of individual pupils depend to a very great extent on their innate aptitudes and interests. The duty of schools is to give everybody a grounding which will enable them to live independently.

The school year

The Swedish school year comprises 40 weeks and is divided into two terms. Autumn term begins on about 20th August and ends in December, just before Christmas. Spring term begins not later than 10th January and ends on about 10th June. The Christmas holiday lasts for about two weeks, the summer holiday for about ten. There is usually a short autumn holiday at the beginning of November. During the spring there is a winter sports holiday for one week at the end of February or in early March; the timing varies from one part of the country to another. The Easter holiday also comprises one week surrounding the actual festival. Dates for the beginning and end of terms and one-day holidays are fixed by the local education committees, which are thus responsible for ensuring that the statutory amount of instruction is provided.

Municipal adult education usually has a shorter term than both compulsory school and upper secondary school, starting a little later and ending a little earlier. On the other hand there are fewer and shorter holidays during the school year than in youth education.

Municipal educational planning

Objectives for the expansion of schools at municipal level have been gradually evolved since 1950. These quantitative objectives have now been achieved: as from the early 1970s, the nine-year compulsory comprehensive school has been fully implemented in all municipalities; upper secondary schools can admit all compulsory school leavers and guarantee them at least two years' instruction; and municipal adult education can give all-comers the opportunity of studies corresponding to the senior level of compulsory school and upper secondary school, as well as special vocational education.

The objectives now being defined by the Government and Riksdag for municipal school planning are concerned with school activities, e.g. measures to facilitate transition from pre-school education to compulsory school, planned and purpose-oriented in-service education and training, and closer contacts between schools and the community at large. Objectives of this kind, of course, have to be made an integral part of municipal planning, but they do not have the same impact as quantitative objectives on educational spending. In this latter context, a far more important part is played by the financial frames laid down by the Riksdag.

Frames defined by the State

The budgetary frames for school activities are defined by the State, partly as a result of the Riksdag voting funds for such activities as are financed out of State grants. The Riksdag also fixes the maximum number of admissions in upper secondary schools and the number of teacher periods to be made available for municipal adult education. The monies, student equivalents (places) and teacher periods are distributed by the National Board of Education where upper secondary school and adult education are concerned. The distribution of funds for compulsory school is the responsibility of the county education boards, and it is effected annually through a specification of the number of base units (see pp. 43 and 52). This distribution is based on both State and municipal long-range assessments. The establishment of new upper secondary schools is another measure requiring State consent. On the other hand the municipality itself decides on the erection of new school buildings for all kinds of municipal educational activity. The State frames are predominately financial, but where upper secondary schools are concerned they also involve an assessment of employment demand for persons with educational qualifications of various kinds. This assessment is binding on schools but not on the labour market, which in Sweden as in the rest of the western world develops according to its own laws. As a result, great differences can occur between the local supply of and demand for skilled labour.

Long-term planning

Municipal financial planning generally takes the form of continuous planning for quite long periods—sometimes five, sometimes ten years. The local education committee normally plans its expenditures and revenues for operating schools on a five-year basis, with detailed plans for the initial years and more general plans for the rest of the period. Thus the committee estimates the number of pupils for each year and the expenditure and State grant which this implies. Since schools comprise the largest sphere of activity in practically all Swedish municipalities, the local education committee's assessment of both expenditure and revenues does a great deal to influence the municipality's ability to avoid cost overrun.

The municipalities are now responsible for all capital expenditures involved by school activities, viz. the construction of schools and sports facilities, the procurement of equipment for the same and alterations and maintenance. No State grants are payable towards capital expenditures, except with respect to certain items of upper secondary school equipment and new upper secondary school equipment necessitated by curricular changes such as the addition of new subject items in the technical and technical/industrial lines or computer education. Understandably, new educational equipment for schools cannot be planned more than two or three years ahead. Other school investments are planned on a ten-year basis in such a way that the estimated costs are divided between the first five years individually, with a lump sum allocated for the last five. These plans also include a specification of schools which should be phased out because of declining school age populations in their catchment areas. Long-term planning is also an important means of public information concerning changes scheduled with regard to schools and other facilities.

Interaction in the cultural and social sectors

A holistic view of the individual

Legislation in the educational and social sectors is based on a holistic view of the individual. Measures taken by the responsible authorities must refer to the individual as a whole. They must not be based on one-sided or inadequate knowledge of the situation and needs of the individual person. This makes it necessary for municipal authorities to co-operate in building up municipal services.

Long-range municipal planning, of course, is directed by the municipal executive committee in conjunction with all the other municipal authorities. The cultural and social sectors are responsible for schools and libraries, the theatre, music and lectures with facilities for the same, sports facilities, pensioners' homes and child care amenities. This demands long-range joint planning and close co-operation in the detailing of facilities. Long-range planning and concrete work of this kind also reflect a holistic approach to the individual. Schools, which are the compulsory sector of activity, are often surrounded by community centres comprising, for example, sports amenities, child care amenities, libraries and amenities for senior citizens. In this way various kinds of service can be offered in one place and facilities can be pooled for a variety of purposes. This type of arrangement also serves to encourage contacts between children and elderly persons, and between children and economically active adults. A great deal of headway has thus been made where organisational co-ordination is concerned. How long it will take to achieve a genuine consensus with regard to assessments and practical applications is another question. The slow transformation of the internal work of schools suggests that this will be a long-drawn-out process.

The integrated school day and afternoon activities

A Riksdag resolution passed in 1978 made it possible for municipalities to introduce an integrated school day, i.e. to design the school day in such a way as to alternate between timetable and off-timetable activities in school. The integrated school day is longer than that defined by the school time schedules. Through the free activities it offers not only opportunities of establishing and developing personal interests of various kinds but also more extensive care for children and young persons, since schools assume responsibility for them for a larger part of the day than used to be the case. (Concerning the content of free activities, see p. 57.)

The structure of the integrated school day varies from one municipality and school to another. In some places it involves voluntary supervision of children before school begins, many free activities during the school day and voluntary afternoon activities after school hours. Obviously, schools cannot assume full responsibility for these extensive activities, which instead are based on co-operation between the local education committee and the social welfare, recreation and cultural committees, but under school sponsorship.

In municipalities where the integrated school day is limited or non-existent, co-operation still occurs between different authorities. Schools and other facilities are used for afternoon activities for children, for the activities of clubs and associations of various kinds and as centres of such voluntary activities as sports, cultural pursuits and politics.

Other measures on behalf of children and young persons

In recent years, a great deal of co-operation has also evolved between the local education committee and other municipal bodies with regard to activities besides those which are directly involved by or connected with the school day. Since most parents in Sweden are gainfully employed, many children need organised leisure activities in their home areas for part of the school holidays, while their parents are away at work. In addition, older children need hands-on experience of working life during part of the summer holiday. Activities of this kind form part of the concerted efforts which are being made to prevent the acquisition of bad habits and the incipient use of drugs etc. which can lead to abuse.

Schools, while not being directly responsible for measures of this kind, have come to play a prominent part in them, partly because they have access to a variety of pupil welfare specialists in addition to teaching staff. Social welfare officers and school psychologists, school nurses and school assistants get to know children in a different way than teachers can during lessons. They notice children who, in one way or another, are at risk or simply need more adult contacts. These observations are utilised in the planning of leisure activities and holiday work, in measures for the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse and in efforts to counteract undesirable gang behaviour.

Decentralisation and local decision-making

As stated earlier, the activities which municipalities, through their various authorities, organise for children and young persons are based on a holistic view of the individual. Social care, schools, leisure and cultural amenities are designed, in conjunction with family life, to achieve the best possible environment and the best possible individual development. This calls for a concerted view of the individual and an explicit line of policy which is known to and accepted by everybody as a basis for decision-making.

The Swedish school system has long been highly centralised in the sense that decisions are made by national authorities and their local implementation is made subject to binding directions. Other municipal activities have been less rigorously controlled by the State, but even as regards cultural and social activities outside schools, recommendations have existed which, when put into effect, have assumed the character of directives.

The 1970s witnessed a spate of decentralisation in all municipal activities, the idea being that decisions should be made as close as possible to the point at which they were put into effect. The persons responsible for everyday work and familiar with practical conditions, it was said, should also be allowed to decide how money was to be spent, the best way of looking after children, and how the school day was to be organised, just to mention a few examples. This would guarantee the adequacy of the measures taken and would enhance the interest taken by employees and their sense of responsibility.

Statutory instruments and curricula have been revised to facilitate local decision-making. Local education committees and other municipal authorities have been instructed to make sure that uniformity and equal standards are still achieved. This task is combined with responsibility for establishing a basic consensus whereby decisions will be based more on consideration of the best interests of children and the rising generation than on the convenience of employees. One can safely assume that the local education committee and other local decision-makers—headmasters, teachers and other school staff—are intent on providing pupils with a good school. But it is equally safe to assume that interpretations and convictions concerning the children's best interests vary a great deal from one place to another. Decentralisation makes it more difficult to maintain uniform and equal standards. But it does not appear to have made this impossible. Even in a society of decentralised decision-making, there are State policy instruments which continue to exert a great deal of influence.

State Controls

In the preceding chapters we have several times emphasised the efforts being made, despite far-reaching decentralisation of decision-making powers, to achieve uniformity and equality of standards within the school system as a whole. This is not possible without a widespread consensus regarding the objectives of the school system and its mission in society. This consensus must be established and maintained among school management and staff, and among pupils and their parents, by means of constant information, debate and, as far as school management and staff are concerned, by in-service education and training on the subject of school objectives and activities. At the same time the content and purpose of the policy levers existing must be made clear. Those policy levers will now be briefly passed in review.

The Education Act and the Education Ordinance

The Education Act was passed by the Riksdag in 1962 when it was decided to introduce the nine-year compulsory comprehensive school. This Act defines the commitments of the community, the obligations of municipalities and county councils, and the rights of the individual as regards primary and secondary education. It also deals with the duty of the citizen to exercise his right to education in compulsory school. In addition, the Act contains various fundamental provisions concerning the management and organisation of municipal schools. All of these provisions are aimed at establishing the greatest possible equality between different municipalities and sub-municipal areas. Finally the Act includes certain provisions concerning the duties and composition of the county education boards, which are the State authorities at regional level for the school sector.

Section 1 of the Act defines the purpose of the instruction which society provides for children and young persons. This section was highly controversial from the very outset, on account of the objectives it specifies. It reads as follows: "The purpose of the instruction which society provides for children and young persons is to equip the pupils with knowledge and develop their skills, and also, in partnership with their homes, to promote their development into balanced individuals and competent, responsible members of society." Knowledge and skills are thus made an end in themselves. School work is not, as it was described by the 1946 Schools Commission, a means of promoting the pupils' development into active members of society. In the 1962 and 1969 Curricula, however, this Section 1 was taken to imply that the objective of compulsory schooling was "in partnership with homes . . . to promote the pupils' all-round development and in doing so to equip them with knowledge and develop their skills". This interpretation of the objectives also applies to upper secondary schools. The 1980 Compulsory School Curriculum also quotes Section 1 of the Education Act, but supplies its own, much lengthier interpretation, though without contradicting the unequivocable statement made in previous curricula to the effect that school work is a means, not an end, for schools in their task of co-operating with families to promote their pupils' all-round development. An interpretation on the lines of the 1962 curriculum is and remains necessary in order for pupils to be induced to play an active part in school work, otherwise we will risk ending up with passive pupils who at best will learn for the moment instead of developing their knowledge and skills for life.

Whereas the Education Act is confined to a modest, concise ten pages, the Education Ordinance is a formidable collection of statutory instruments running to almost 300 pages of main text and over 100 pages in appendix form, making about 400 all told. A great deal of the Education Ordinance, however, is made up of commentaries on the statutory text. The latest revisions of the Ordinance betray a firm effort to avoid detailed prescriptions in favour of guidelines concerning the way in which work should be organised in compulsory and upper secondary schools. The most important sections of the Education Ordinance contain provisions for the implementation of the Education Act, basic provisions concerning the work of the headmaster and other staff in partnership with pupils and their parents, and provisions concerning the work of compulsory and upper secondary schools. The Ordinance also includes provisions concerning staff in general and the formal qualifications required of teaching staff.

Municipal adult education comes under a special ordinance which to a great extent ties in with or refers to the Education Ordinance, while at the same time including provisions of a more specific nature.

The Education Ordinance may strike the uninitiated as a very exact description of the way in which municipal schools are to be run, how pupils are to be treated, how school management and staff are to operate and so forth. Properly used, however, it furnishes useful guidance in the task of achieving uniformity and equality in Swedish schools, without obstructing or stifling initiatives which can help to secure the active involvement of staff and pupils in the actual business of school work.

Curricula

The curricula are the main foundation underlying the work of schools and groups of pupils. Curricula now exist for compulsory schools, upper secondary schools and adult education, but not for pre-school education. Special schools for the mentally retarded, which are run by county councils, also have a curriculum, which however will not be dealt with here.

The curricula are divided into the following main sections: goals and guidelines, time schedules and syllabi. The design of these sections varies a great deal from one type of school to another, but in all cases the overriding objective is that already described. This overriding objective, however, is combined with objectives specific to the various kinds of school. For example, upper secondary schools are required to prepare their students for further studies and to provide them with a certain amount of training for future vocational activity, though with emphases and to extents which vary from one line of studies to another. The general guidelines also deal with such matters as school work procedures, free options, co-operation between schools and families, pre-school education, associations, schools and working life, schools and culture, educational and vocational orientation, pupil welfare, measures on behalf of pupils with special needs, evaluation and the award of marks. The general guidelines of the 1980 Compulsory School Curriculum (Lgr 80) are more categorical than in the previous curricula. Quite a few "shoulds" have been replaced with "musts". The syllabi specify the objectives for each subject or group of subjects and the subject items which are to be dealt with in the teaching of individual subjects. (The content of the compulsory school and upper secondary school curricula will be dealt with in greater detail on pp. 45 and 68. Curricular work relating to adult education is dealt with on p. 76.)

At first, the compulsory school and upper secondary school curricula were highly detailed, but every new revision has reduced the amount of detail and instead lent added weight to the general guidelines. The control now exerted can be described as management by objectives as distinct from the former practice of management by command.

The curricula, like the Education Act and Education Ordinance, are aids to the construction of a school system which is equally good for Anna and Staffan in Stockholm or Göteborg as for Ulrika and Peter in the forest communities of Småland in the south or the sparsely populated areas of Norrbotten in the far north. Within the framework of established time schedules for the various levels of schools and concise syllabi for individual subjects and groups of subjects they give local education committees and individual schools/teachers an opportunity of arranging work to suit pupils and school staff and ensuring that the individual pupil gets as much out of his or her studies as is possible. One difference between the Swedish curricula and curricula in the rest of the western world, at least outside the Nordic area, is that they apply throughout the country. All children in all schools have the same number of Swedish, mathematics and English periods, etc., throughout their nine years of compulsory schooling. What is more, they cover the same main teaching items in every subject.

The amount which pupils can assimilate varies of course, depending on their individual aptitudes and interests. But the differentiation made in response to the personal aptitudes and interests of individual pupils is based on a common curriculum ensuring that everybody receives a basic grounding in every main teaching item specified by the syllabi for the compulsory or optional subjects. The curricula help to create a universal frame of reference on which to base co-operation and a sense of community.

Adoption and inspection of teaching materials

Teaching materials in Sweden are produced by private publishers on a purely commercial basis. In all types of school, the term "teaching materials" is susceptible of a very broad interpretation. Lgr 80 sheds a great deal of light on this matter. Teaching materials are there defined as "material which teachers and pupils agree to use in pursuit of predefined objectives".

But the curricula also refer to special teaching materials, and where these are concerned an essential role is played by printed materials. Printed materials covering the content of entire subjects or group of subjects (or essential parts of individual subjects) according to current curricula are termed basic teaching materials and are adopted by the local education committee at the instance of the headmaster, who in turn submits his proposals after first consulting representatives of the subject in question and the pupils.

In order to get a product registered as basic teaching material, the producer sends it to the National Institute for Teaching Aids Information, the governing body and Director of which are appointed by the Government. To this Institute is attached a teaching materials committee, also appointed by the Government and responsible for the inspection of teaching materials. Inspection of this kind refers to the objectivity and impartiality of the teaching material and, where materials for social subjects are concerned, must always be carried out by one or two special inspectors. Apart from considerations of objectivity and impartiality, the aim here is also to ensure a neutral presentation. Otherwise basic teaching materials can be adopted for the various types of school if they cover essential portions of a subject, group of subjects or teaching item in accordance with current curricula and are conducive to regularity and coherence in teaching. As regards teaching materials inspected under its auspices, the committee is required to issue a statement based on the inspector's assessment. This statement has to be transmitted to schools and municipalities requesting it. By designating basic teaching materials and, in certain cases, having teaching materials inspected, the State thus assumes a certain measure of responsibility for the quality of the printed teaching materials which the local education committees decide to use in their schools.

The National Institute for Teaching Aids Information, as the name implies, is responsible for compiling objective information for schools concerning printed teaching materials. The Institute discharges this duty under a special agreement between the State and the Swedish Association of Producers of Educational Aids.

State grants

The apportionment of costs between State and municipality will be dealt with elsewhere. Here we shall briefly consider the State contribution towards cost coverage, which is a means of achieving uniformity and equal standards. Ordinances concerning State running grants for compulsory schools, upper secondary schools, adult education and certain special arrangements within these forms of education assure all municipalities of State grants on essentially equal terms.

Grants are paid towards lessons in accordance with the time schedules in the number of basic units (classes) or groups specified for the school concerned, and also towards various supportive arrange-

Irrespective of whether the schools are situated in sparsely populated areas like the village school above, or in urban communities like the school below, the compulsory and upper secondary school curricula are the same throughout the country. All children, wherever they live and go to school, thus receive the same basic education which will enable them to go on to further studies.

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ments. The latter type of grant is paid according to the number of pupils in each school and is earmarked primarily for pupils requiring special assistance. This "reinforcement resource" can be used to divide a class or work unit into smaller groups for certain subjects, to enlist the services of persons outside the school, to arrange camp schools, to take special measures at the beginning of the school year in connection with transitions between school levels or to back up teaching activities in some other way. Part of the reinforcement resource always has to be used for arranging educational and vocational orientation under the supervision of specially trained staff, Syo officers. Only a small portion of the resource may be applied to activities other than teacher-directed instruction. This resource has an important bearing on teaching standards and puts Sweden in a favourable position compared with many other countries.

In addition to State grants towards teacher periods and supportive arrangements, grants are also payable for special measures in the school sector. These grants are distributed by the county education boards in accordance with municipal needs and they thus constitute a means of achieving fairness between municipalities with problems of various magnitude. These grants, for example, can provide a general reinforcement of teaching activities in municipalities with large numbers of immigrant children in school. They can finance important experimental activities or they can be allocated for teaching in a particular municipality which is also made available to pupils from elsewhere.

The total State grant received by a municipality is freely disposable within its school sector. This is termed the free deployment of resources and runs clean contrary to the former system of numerous earmarked grants. The State grant is now distributed by the local education committee between schools and school management districts, according to the needs of each. Within each school it is the headmaster, acting in consultation with staff, pupils and parents, who decides how funds are to be allocated. These allocations are then controlled by the various working units, lines or subject groups, within which resources are thus freely deployed. This free deployment of resources must be based on pupils' needs and must help to ensure that each pupil receives what for him or her personally is the best possible teaching for achieving the best possible educational results.

Eligibility requirements, agreements, etc.

The Education Ordinance includes special provisions concerning qualifications for teaching appointments and headmasterships in municipal schools, i.e. the education which these staff categories should have received. The Ordinance also indicates how qualifications are to be evaluated and how other plus points are to be taken into consideration for these purposes. Persons meeting the formal qualifications always have priority over those lacking full eligibility. With the employment situation as it is today, the proportion of qualified teachers is generally very high, though it is quite possible, for example, for university cities and certain other urban communities to have schools staffed almost exclusively by fully qualified teachers at all levels at the same time as other municipalities may have a relatively large percentage of unqualified teachers. The supply of qualified teachers also varies from one school level and teaching subject to another, being most abundant as regards junior and intermediate level teachers and teachers of modern languages and social sciences, and smallest in the case of certain vocational subjects in upper secondary school.

All teaching appointments except those of upper secondary school *lektors** (appointed by the National Board of Education) have been in the hands of the municipalities themselves since 1982. Appointments are made in accordance with the provisions of the Education Ordinance concerning the evaluation of qualifications and can be contested by appeal to the National Board of Education.

Compulsory school and upper secondary school headmasters are appointed by the county education boards and nominated by the local education committees. The official reason for this procedure is that county education boards are felt to be capable of greater objectivity in their appraisal of applicants for such appointments. There are cases of a county education board appointing some other person instead of the local education committee's nominee, but this is very rare. The county education board's decision can be contested by appeal to the National Board of Education.

One factor which means a great deal to efforts to achieve equality of standards between individual municipalities is that rates of pay for teachers and headmasters are fixed on a nationwide basis through negotiations between the National Agency for Government Employers and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and, on the other hand the relevant professional associations. Other school staff categories also come under a collective bargaining system whereby uniform rates of pay are agreed on for persons discharging the same duties in municipalities of comparable size.

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* A *lektor* is a subject teacher with a postgraduate degree (Ph.D. or its equivalent in technical and economic subjects) who is head of his subject department and responsible for ensuring a high academic standard of teaching.

The Swedish system of collective bargaining makes it impossible for municipalities to outbid one another in order to attract the best headmasters, teachers, social welfare officers, school nurses, etc. Teaching appointments carry uniform rates of pay throughout the country. The rates of pay for non-teaching staff are determined according to the size of the municipality and the nature of the duties involved, and these assessments are based on nationwide criteria.

Counselling and supervision

The tasks of the National Board of Education—the supreme State authority in the school sector subordinate to the Government—and the county education boards, i.e. the regional State authorities in the school sector (see also p. 107), include the supervision of schools.

The National Board of Education itself does not carry out any inspections, but it issues guidelines, recommendations and directions with an important bearing on school work, publicises research findings, new enactments, new teaching materials for certain subjects, equipment for technical and vocational lines of study and so on. Continuous information takes the form of a code of regulations—small booklets distributed to schools and referring to school legislation.

Inspection and control are to a great extent conducted by the county education boards drawing up annual specifications of the size of a municipal school system in terms of pupil groups qualifying for State grants. Physical inspection is mainly conducted by visiting inspectors and other personnel from the county education board, though the visits which they pay are seldom a matter of "trouble-shooting". More commonly they are paid in order to investigate the environment and working methods and to transmit experience from one municipality to another. If, however, direct errors or abuses are observed, it is the duty of the county education board to draw attention to the fact; this applies, for example, if work is not being conducted in accordance with the curriculum, if the municipality is neglecting to provide assistance for pupils with special needs, if school facilities are substandard or unsuitable for their purpose, or if marks, in the grades where they occur, are not being awarded in accordance with the guidelines. Most often, however, the visits paid by county education board staff to schools are more concerned with encouraging new experiments than finding fault.

Experts in various subject fields are also attached to the county education boards, with the task of following instruction in their respective fields in all types of school and contributing towards the development of teaching methods within those fields. These experts can also take part in in-service education and training activities and ensure that subsequent training is established at central level in fields of importance to the municipalities.

The observations made by county education board personnel are passed on in annual reports to the National Board of Education, which in turn publicises interesting experiments, well-planned in-service education and training, unusual but practical local arrangements, etc. In this way the efforts made by municipalities to achieve equal standards in local schools throughout the country, and the various expedients they adopt to this end, can be evaluated and co-ordinated at regional and central levels and, ultimately, be made to benefit the entire country.

The information and counselling activities of the National Board of Education include the compilation of a number of widely distributed publications. The curricula, together with their commentaries and supplements, bulk large in this context but will be dealt with below in connection with the various types of school (pp. 45 and 68). All headmasters and many other school staff categories, as well as political representatives and trade union officials, have an important source of information and facts concerning school regulations in the Statute Book for the Education System, a new edition of which is published every autumn. Continuous information is published in the code of regulations mentioned above, which describes legislative and curricular amendments and other questions of administration, economics and pedagogics. Finally, there are a number of periodicals and books which are published on a normal commercial basis but compiled in close consultation with the National Board of Education. These wide-ranging publishing activities also form part of the efforts made to achieve uniformity and equal standards throughout the Swedish school system.

Forms of Education

Child care

Municipal responsibilities for the *education* of children, young persons and adults are defined in the Education Act. Responsibilities concerning the *care* of these groups, on the other hand, are defined in the Social Services Act, which in 1982 superseded a number of earlier enactments, among them the Child Care Act. The Social Services Act marks an integral approach towards the responsibility of the community for the economic and social security of the individual, for equality of living conditions and active participation in the life of the community on a basis of democracy and solidarity.

The Social Services Act is couched in more general terms and contains fewer detailed specifications of municipal obligations than the Education Act, which is of a more specific nature. The Social Services Act makes the municipalities, through their social welfare committees, ultimately responsible for ensuring that municipal residents receive the support and assistance they need. Supervisory powers at State level are vested in the National Board of Health and Welfare.

Municipalities must take steps to assure children and young persons of good and secure conditions to grow up in. Acting in close cooperation with the family, they must promote the all-round personal development of the rising generation. Special protection and support must be given to children who are in danger of going off the rails. A young person whose own best interests so demand must be provided with care and upbringing away from home.

Pre-school education and leisure time centres

Pre-school and leisure time centre activities must be maintained for children permanently residing in the municipality. Pre-school activities are incumbent on the municipality only as regards 6-year-olds and children whose schooling has been deferred beyond the age of 7. Children who for physical, mental or other reasons require special support in their development must be allocated pre-school places earlier than the year of their sixth birthday. By systematically expanding pre-school and leisure time centre activities, the municipalities must ensure that special care is provided for those children who need it on account of their parents' gainful employment or studies or for other reasons.

The scale of pre-school and leisure time centre activities, over and above obligations towards 6-year-olds and children with special needs, is left to the municipalities themselves to decide. Consequently the extent to which pre-school and leisure time centre amenities have been developed varies a great deal from one municipality to another, and the same goes for the cost of child care amenities to the family. It is only compulsory pre-school activities for 6-year-olds and children whose schooling has been deferred, constituting at least 525 hours per annum or at least 15 hours per week, that are entirely free of charge to the individual. Otherwise charges are levied or waived according to the financial resources of the individual family. The State grant payable towards day nurseries and leisure time centres is not combined with any provisions concerning maximum charges or free amenities.

In the middle of the 1970s, the Riksdag resolved that municipal child care amenities were to be encouraged so as to attain "full coverage of needs" before the mid-eighties. This target has not been reached and by all accounts will not be achieved during the present decade.

Current generations comprise more than 100,000 children each, making a total of some 650,000 aged up to 6 years and about 440,000 of junior school age (7–10 years). Rather more than half of all pre-school children today (about 335,000, including 245,000 in municipal child care) have been admitted to some form of municipal or other public child care. Little more than one-fifth of children between the ages of 7 and 10 have been found places in municipal leisure time centres.

The meaning of "full coverage of needs" is debatable. If the reference is to resources corresponding to actual demand as reflected by day nursery and leisure time centre waiting lists, the target is not unattainable. Current estimates indicate that about 75,000 day nursery places and about 25,000 leisure time centre places are needed. If, on the other hand, full coverage of needs implies that all parents, both women and men, willing and able to work should be able to go out to work and obtain good care for their children, the expansion requirement is clearly several times greater, not least where leisure time centres are concerned.

How activities are organised

Municipal pre-school education today comprises day nurseries and part-time groups (play schools) on municipal premises, and family day nurseries with childminders salaried by municipal authorities. Leisure time centres are housed either in municipal day nurseries or junior and intermediate level schools or else in the homes of families salaried by municipal authorities.

Day nurseries can admit children from the age of 6 months. Since, however, paid parental leave now totals 12 months (6 of which can be saved up and utilised at any time until the child starts school or reaches the age of 8), most children start day nursery later. The child is then entitled to continue attending day nursery until it starts school. Due to the rising employment participation rate among mothers of very young children, part-time groups are diminishing in volume.

Parents primarily apply for day nursery for the whole or most of the working day. Leisure time centres admit children of school age who need looking after before school begins or, after school hours, until their parents are able to collect them on the way home from work. Some leisure time centres also stay open during school holidays, in which case they operate all day. Strictly speaking, leisure time centre places are available to children between the ages of 7 and 12 inclusive, but there are few municipalities capable of admitting children above the age of 10.

Children's groups in pre-school education generally comprise between 12 and 15 children but can be larger, numbering anything up to 20. The staff-children ratio is very high, four or five children per employee being the usual arrangement. This has been challenged on both financial and educational grounds, some of the critics maintaining that the children become overprotected and passive. The staff are pre-school teachers with two-and-a-half years' training and childminders who have completed the two-year nursing line of upper secondary school or special courses lasting one term or one school year. Leisure time centres are staffed by recreation instructors with two-and-a-half years' training and childminders. A day nursery usually has two or four pre-school departments and one or two leisure time centre departments. Every day nursery has a warden who is directly responsible to the child care department of the municipal social welfare authority.

The content of activities

Pre-school and leisure time centre activities are subject to general recommendations but do not have any formal curricula. Child care amenities originated in the practical need for looking after certain children. As a means of methodically promoting children's development, these activities are of recent vintage. At political level there is still a conflict in progress concerning the pros and cons of universal public child care. Parents, however, regardless of their political convictions, display great confidence in these activities and readily emphasise the importance of educational planning.

Pre-school and leisure time centre activities take as their starting point everyday situations, children's games, adults' jobs and contacts with the surrounding community. Day nurseries are equipped with kitchens designed so that children can use them without any difficulty. Everyday household chores are an important part of activities, so too are nature study excursions and visits to places of employment and public amenities. The children's own games occupy a large proportion of their time in day nursery.

The staff are required to plan their activities continuously. In the absence of specific instructions, these activities vary a great deal from one day nursery to another. Some nurseries have a deliberate educational focus, while others are mainly concerned with looking after children in their parents' absence. A considered balance between care and upbringing is of course desirable, but at present there are no plans on which such a balance can be based. It seems generally fair to say, however, that the most considered educational measures are taken with reference to children not having Swedish as their mother tongue (home language). Language training is generally provided for children from the age of 4 or 5, the aim being to make it easier for immigrant children to retain active command of their home language and become naturally bilingual.

Special programmes are arranged, conjointly with the junior level of compulsory school, for the oldest pre-school children, the 6- and 7-year-olds, who are due to start school in the autumn of the year when they are 7. These children are given an opportunity of visiting the school they will be attending and getting to know older children, teachers and other staff at junior level. Together with their parents they are shown something of school work and routines and in this way receive some indication of the purely practical demands they will have to meet when they themselves start school. Another purpose of these activities is by means of co-operation between transmitting and receiving teachers to facilitate the beginning of school, especially in the case of children who can be expected to run into certain difficulties. Co-operation of this kind between pre-school education and compulsory school has been developed a great deal in some quarters and needs to be established on a more permanent basis.

Official inquiries and experimental schemes

An inquiry is currently in progress concerning pre-school activities and collaboration between pre-school and compulsory school. The Riksdag has given priority to experimental arrangements for collaboration between pre-school and compulsory school and for measures to facilitate the transition from pre-school education to compulsory schooling. The status of leisure time centres in relation to compulsory school is also a topic of vigorous discussion. The respective attitudes and opinions of social welfare authorities and education authorities frequently diverge, with unfortunate effects on the activities themselves. As long as child care and schooling remain the responsibilities of separate authorities at national and local levels, there must be clear directives concerning the methods and purpose of co-operation between the two. As things now stand, the holistic view of the child, the growing individual, which constitutes the fundamental idea of both the Social Services Act and the Education Act is being jeopardised. The same goes for co-operation between pre-school and compulsory school for the benefit of 6-year-olds and for co-operation between leisure time centres and compulsory school. The inquiry now in progress is intended among other things to solve problems of this kind.

Compulsory school

A school for everybody

Compulsory school age begins in the autumn term of the year in which a child is 7 years old and concludes at the end of the spring term of the year in which the pupil is 16, unless he has already completed nine years' compulsory school earlier. The great majority of children complete their compulsory schooling in municipal compulsory comprehensive schools. A small number attend private ("independent") schools or are taught at home. It is the duty of municipal authorities to ensure that children not receiving and completing their compulsory schooling in municipal schools receive the instruction to which the law entitles them. To this end, inspection visits are paid to independent schools and tests are administered to children taught at home.

As explained on pp. 28 and 29, the objective of compulsory schools is to promote the children's personal development in collaboration with their homes. This objective is formulated with reference to the individual pupils in a school intended for everybody. No absolute objectives are defined in terms of knowledge or skills. Each individual is entitled through his work at school to achieve the best possible development in keeping with aptitudes and interests, while at the same time developing his capacity for co-operation through partnership with other pupils and with teachers and other staff. Marks are sparingly awarded and there are no examinations serving to focus school work on a uniform body of knowledge.

The structure of compulsory school

Compulsory school comprises nine grades and is divided into three levels, viz. junior level (grades 1–3), intermediate level (grades 4–6) and senior level (grades 7–9). Organisational structure and the volume of work in the various grades can be seen from the diagram below, some aspects of which are commented on p. 45 et seq.

All municipalities are required to maintain compulsory schools. The great majority have both senior and junior/intermediate level schools. The smallest municipalities can send their children to senior level schools in neighbouring municipalities instead of maintaining their own, on condition that the travelling involved does not give the children an unacceptably long working day.

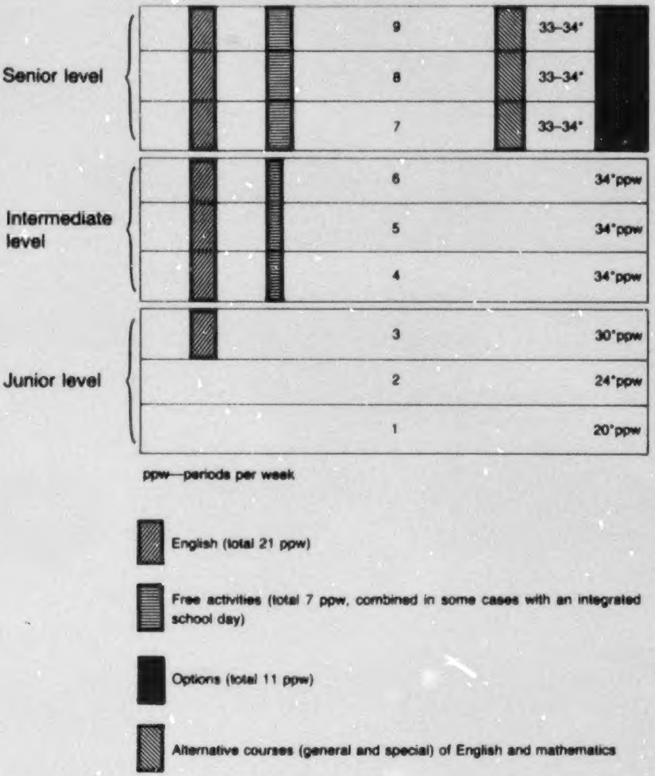
Individual schools are sited according to the population of their catchment areas. A very large majority of children in Sweden can walk to their junior level schools, and the same goes for pupils at intermediate level. These two levels are generally housed under the same roof, with children attending the school nearest home. Parents are not at liberty to send their children to another municipal school.

Most schools have at least one class or base unit (see also p. 52) for every grade, both at junior level and at intermediate level. At junior level a new base unit is started for every unit or partial unit of 25 pupils, while the corresponding "breakpoint" at intermediate and senior levels is 30. In small communities, children belonging to different grades at junior or intermediate level can be included in one and the same base unit and taught together. In this case a junior and intermediate level school can have six grades but only two or three teaching groups, each of which is taken by one teacher. Schools of this kind are known as B-schools.

Pupil numbers vary a great deal from one school to another. The pupil strength of a junior and intermediate level B-school never exceeds two figures. Normally, though, a junior and intermediate level school will have between 100 and 300 pupils.

Senior level schools are located in larger communities. There are no B-schools at this level. Senior level schools have one or more base units per grade, i.e. the number of pupils per grade is at least between

Compulsory school—organisational structure and volume of work


Senior level
Intermediate level
Junior level
9
33–34*
8
33–34*
7
33–34*
6
34*ppw
5
34*ppw
4
34*ppw
3
30*ppw
2
24*ppw
1
20*ppw
ppw—periods per week
English (total 21 ppw)
Free activities (total 7 ppw, combined in some cases with an integrated school day)
Options (total 11 ppw)
Alternative courses (general and special) of English and mathematics

* Not including free activities.

20 and 30. Usually, however, the figure is much higher; as a general rule it is between 75 and 150–200 per grade or 200–600 per school. In sparsely populated areas where children would have too long a journey to a centrally located senior level school, efforts are made to avoid this difficulty by using a certain amount of correspondence tuition.

Individual schools are grouped together in school management districts comprising three, or sometimes only two, levels each. Every such district comes under a headmaster, whose second in command, the director of studies, is mainly in charge of everyday teaching activities.

The curriculum—content and working methods

Ever since the compulsory comprehensive school was introduced in 1962, its work has been guided by a special curriculum called the Compulsory School Curriculum. This curriculum is continuously revised in the light of experience gained from its application and in response to social developments in various fields. The first curriculum was called the 1962 Compulsory School Curriculum (Lgr 62 for short). Subsequent editions have been correspondingly abbreviated Lgr 69 and Lgr 80. The latter is the edition now in force.

The subjects taught at the various levels of compulsory school can be seen from the table below and also from the chart showing organisational structure and volume of work on p. 44. As will be seen, Swedish is the overwhelmingly predominant subject at both junior and intermediate level, but the number of periods are heavily reduced at senior level, where English and other foreign languages account for most of the systematic language training which pupils receive. Ever since English was made compulsory in the experimental comprehensive school during the 1950s and, later on, in elementary schools as well, the subject content of Swedish has been a topic of lively discussion. The balance between the practice of skills and the reading of good literature is constantly being reappraised. The scope available for reading literature is considered so small that anthologies have had to take the place of longer continuous texts or complete books, though a reversion to more reading of the latter kind seems to be under way in the senior grades. Lgr 80 emphasises that reading practice must continue throughout school and that every teacher is responsible for ensuring that pupils assimilate what they read, regardless of the teaching subject. The heavy emphasis put on reading practice follows the discovery that pupils with good reading ability and reading comprehension at junior level still need to continue their reading practice at higher levels so as not to lose ground and in this way encounter difficulties with their schooling.

The number of teaching subjects is small at junior level, increasing subsequently. At senior level, general subjects are allotted a larger number of periods than others. This category includes social subjects with religious education, history, civics and geography, and science subjects comprising physics, chemistry and biology. Since the 1950s there has been a shift in the distribution of teaching periods away from

Compulsory-school subjects–periods per week (ppw) at different levels

	Jr.	Int.	Sen.
Child studies	–	–	1
Art education	–	6	5
English	2[1]	10	9
Home economics	–	1	4
Sport	6	9	9
Mathematics	13	15	12
Music	4	5	2
General subjects	18[2]	21	32
Social subjects		(15)	(17)
Science subjects		(6)	(15)[3]
Handicraft	2	9	5
Swedish	29	26	10
Options	–	–	11
Free activities	[4]	2[4]	5[4]
Total	74[5]	104[5]	105[5]

The apportionment of ppw between the three grades of each level is determined locally.

[1] May be transferred to intermediate level, with 2 ppw of Swedish or another subject being transferred from intermediate to junior level.

[2] General subjects at junior level also include art education and handicraft (up to and including grade 2).

[3] Including 2 ppw technology.

[4] In cases where an integrated school day has been introduced, junior level has 10–20 ppw, intermediate level an additional 6–10 ppw and senior level an additional 6–8 ppw.

[5] The integrated school day involves additional ppw as per note[4], above.

As from the 1984/85 school year, senior level pupils will have 2 ppw computer science within the framework of the time schedule now in force.

social subjects and in favour of science subjects. It has been judged necessary to give all members of the rising generation a certain amount of knowledge concerning technology in everyday life, and this is now being done primarily through the joint agency of physics, mathematics and handicraft. At senior level, technology is a subject in its own right together with the other science subjects. In common with child studies (which, however, is only allocated a small number of periods) and home economics (a slightly "larger" subject), technology serves as a means of counteracting sexual stereotypes regarding job allocation. All members of the rising generation are trained to cope with everyday household chores, the care of children and simple running repairs. Educational and vocational orientation (Syo) and practical working life orientation (Prao), which are not mentioned in the time schedules but occur throughout compulsory school, are also instruments in the struggle for equal opportunities and against sexual prejudice. Syo and Prao are dealt with at greater length on pp. 56 and 57.

As can be seen from the table, pupils in grades 1–6, i.e. at junior and intermediate levels, all take the same subjects. In addition, they all take one foreign language—English—starting in grade 3 or 4. All intermediate and senior level pupils have free activities off the timetable.

Senior level pupils have certain options from grade 7 onwards. Before this choice is made, schools supply detailed information to pupils and their parents. This information is jointly compiled by the school management, teachers, Syo officers and, if necessary, pupil welfare staff. Schools are required to supply all the information needed in order for the individual pupil to make a favourable and appropriate choice. It is the pupil and his or her parents who have the last word, and schools are not allowed to pressurise pupils in any way.

The options open to pupils comprise optional subjects within a total framework of eleven periods per week during the three years of senior level, and also a choice of two alternative English and mathematics courses respectively. In addition, pupils choose free activities totalling at least five periods per week for the whole of senior level.

Optional subjects always include a second foreign language (French or German) or, as an alternative for immigrant children, their home language (mother tongue). The curriculum includes syllabi for foreign languages as optional subjects throughout the three years of senior level. Roughly two thirds of all pupils start a second foreign language in grade 7. During senior level, however, they can change to other subjects, and so between 50 and 55% of all pupils in grade 9 take French or German. So far very few pupils have taken home languages as optional subjects. Instead these languages are normally studied off the timetable.

The second foreign language, then, is always offered as an optional subject. But there are other options too, with syllabi drawn up by the National Board of Education or devised locally and approved by the county education board. These options are required to constitute a

A new subject, civics, was introduced during the experimental period of the nine-year compulsory comprehensive school. This subject is now taught, in one form or another, throughout compulsory and upper secondary school. Daily newspapers are common and necessary teaching aids.

further development or refinement of items from two or more teaching subjects; in other words, they must not constitute a broadening of studies in one single subject. In most cases these optional subjects incorporate both theoretical and practical items.

Optional subject courses have to be designed in such a way as to attract boys and girls equally. They must not contribute towards the perpetuation of traditional sexual stereotypes and in this way produce an extreme sexual bias in the pupil population taking them. Should this nonetheless prove to be the case, the syllabus has to be revised. Here as in other matters relating to the planning of instruction, ultimate responsibility for counteracting sexual prejudice and promoting equal opportunities in all fields rests with the local education committee. Local optional subjects include "family finance", "fine arts", "environment protection" and "physical welfare". Many schools have a subject called "communication", combining elements of Swedish and art education.

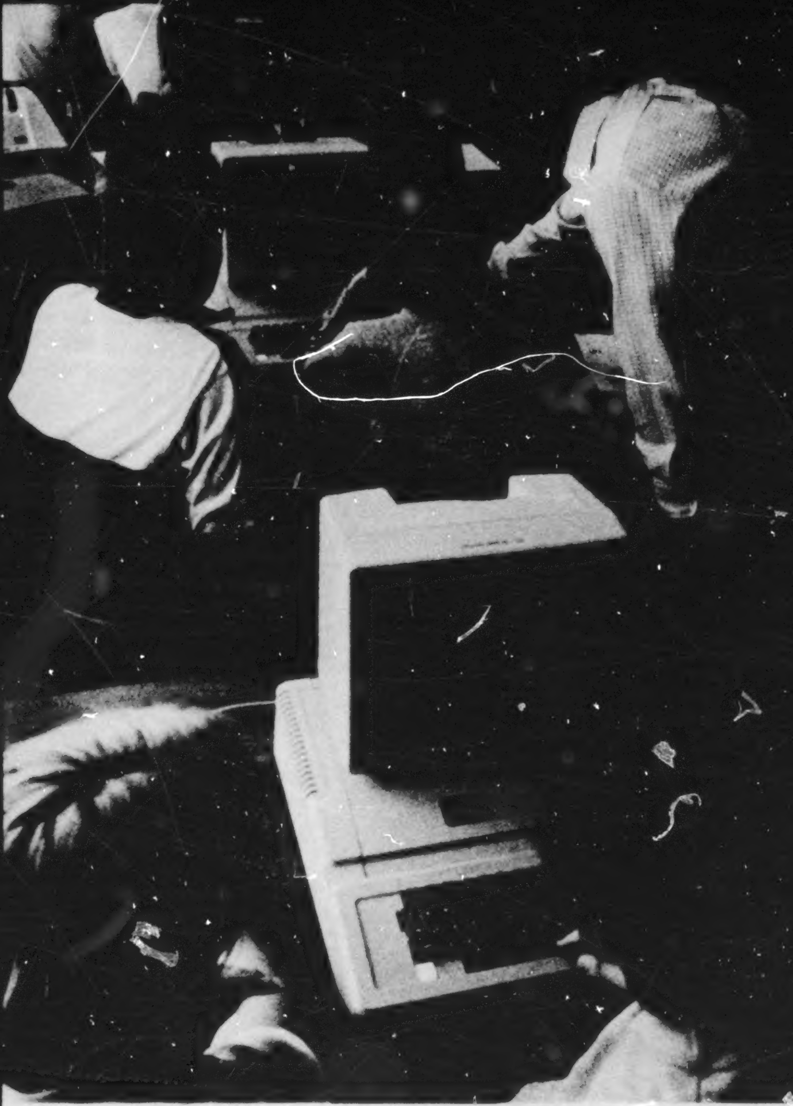
French, German and home language groups have to be set up as soon as at least five pupils express interest. Where other options are concerned, the formation or non-formation of teaching groups is a matter for local decision.

There are alternative English and mathematics courses, termed general and special. These exist to facilitate differentiation according to the pupils' aptitudes, needs and interest, but they are mostly regarded and treated as respectively constituting an easy (general) course for pupils less interested in further studies and a more difficult (special) course for those who are more interested in further studies. On the other hand, pupils do not very often choose between these courses in keeping with their true aptitudes, and so other expedients are being tried in many cases with the aim of providing for the needs of the individual pupil. The alternative English and mathematics courses will probably disappear in the end, as their French and German counterparts have done already.

Throughout compulsory school, the principle is that work must be adapted to suit the individual pupil. It must be of a kind to encourage the pupils to be active and to teach them to assume responsibility for their own work, while at the same time developing their capacity for co-operation with others. Pupils must take part in the planning of school work, first on a short-term and subsequently also on a long-term basis. They must take part in the planning of activities apart from school work as such, e.g. field trips, parent-teacher meetings, open-air days and camp schools.

Work in compulsory school must be conducted in such a way that, whatever their options at senior level, pupils are free to choose their line of upper secondary school. They must not be tied down to groups where the educational achievement required is invariably so low as to provide no foundation for further education. A compulsory school leaving certificate is required, both in principle and in practice, to confer eligibility for further studies at upper secondary school level, subject to the availability of places.

Where teaching subjects are concerned, the 1980 Compulsory School Curriculum (Lgr 80) is a good deal less detailed than its two predecessors and affords greater scope for local decisions and standpoints. Greater importance than ever is devoted to the training of basic skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic, and also, for example, to a basic knowledge of social and technical matters. Interdisciplinary projects are organised a few times every school year, so as to make pupils aware of the connection between their studies of different subjects. Projects of this kind can refer to a continent or a period of history, but they can also relate, for example, to social planning or the destruction of environment. The connection between different sub-



Starting in the 1984/85 school year (picture from grade 9), computer science was made a regular teaching subject in senior level classes, the aim being to familiarise all pupils with information technology but also to acquaint them with the social consequences of increased computerisation.

jects is also reflected by general subjects being treated in the time schedule as a group of subjects, not individually.

What has been described above is the general section of the curriculum, containing goals and guidelines of activities, syllabi for the individual teaching subjects and time schedules for each school level. In addition to the general section, the curriculum also includes commentaries. These can refer to particular aspects of the curriculum, e.g. stipulations concerning local working plans, the training of basic skills, the allocation of resources, evaluation, assistance to pupils in difficulty, free study options, pupils' responsibilities, parental participation, the participation of voluntary organisations, contacts between schools and the employment sector, or other matters. These commentaries are in no way binding. Instead they constitute what is sometimes quite a personal presentation of the topic under consideration.

Local working plans

Lgr 80 requires each school management district to draw up a local working plan stating the goals and aspirations of the individual school for the coming school year and further ahead. This working plan, in other words, is intended as a school development programme while at the same time representing a kind of local curricular work. A general curriculum like Lgr 80 with no binding details is a prerequisite of these local working plans. Lgr 80 does not contain any stipulations concerning the structure of a working plan. Instead both content and design are decided by the school management district and the individual school. As a rule, however, these local working plans will contain concrete objectives regarding skills and knowledge, an educational and vocational orientation plan and a practical working life orientation plan. They also include timetables for conferences and parents' meetings during the school year, plans for open-air days, joint projects, camp schools and other events which amount to interruptions of or additions to ordinary school work. On the basis of these working plans, many schools also draw up diaries setting out a week-by-week programme. The working plan is also used in the evaluation of school work (see pp. 53 and 54).

The compilation and adoption of working plans is something with which Swedish compulsory schools are still rather unfamiliar. These plans differ a great deal even within a single municipality. It is not really feasible for local education committees to study all plans, because these are sometimes highly comprehensive and verbose. Since the local education committees should also specify certain long- and short-term objectives for local school activities, an arrangement will eventually have to be devised whereby the essence of the many local working plans can be used as basic documentation for the working plans which may come to be drawn up for municipal schools in connection with long-range financial planning. In addition, of course, the local education committees may wish to raise questions which, though not included in these plans, can influence the course of school developments in the individual municipality.

Working units and evaluation

Hitherto it has been common practice to divide pupils into classes, with one or more classes per grade. If pupil numbers have been small, classes have been made up of pupils from two or more grades, e.g. grades 1 and 2 or grades 1, 2 and 3. Provisions have existed concerning the maximum permissible number of pupils per class; 25 at junior level and 30 at other levels of compulsory school. The number of classes per school has been a criterion for the award of State grants. In 1978, however, State grants ceased to be awarded on a class basis. Instead they are now computed with reference to the number of base units (see also p. 43). The base units are determined in such a way that a new unit is allowed for every complete or partial unit of 25 pupils at junior level, and every complete or partial unit of 30 pupils at intermediate and senior levels, in each individual school. On the other hand, the number of base units which a school is allowed no longer implies any stipulation concerning the number of classes which that school may or must comprise. It is still commmon practice, however, for classes to be organised grade by grade in the same way as previously.

The Education Ordinance and the curriculum lay down that the pupils in each school are to be divided into working units. Each working unit is to incorporate classes and, for certain teaching purposes, smaller groups. A working unit need not comprise pupils from the same grade. For example, in a junior level school with a total of between 125 and 150 pupils, it is possible for two or three working units to be set up, with pupils from all three grades in each unit. It is also possible to set up working units comprising pupils from grades 1 and 2, with grade 3 pupils forming units together with pupils from grade 4. Similar arrangements can be made throughout intermediate and senior levels. But of course it is quite possible also for working units to be made up of pupils from one and the same grade.

The working units are allotted the number of class teachers or subject teachers warranted and necessitated by the number of pupils and periods. In addition, each working unit is allotted remedial teachers who concentrate on pupils with special needs (se also p. 103

et seq.), and every working unit can draw on the services of pupil welfare staff.

The purpose of these working units, which in most cases comprise between two and six classes, is to facilitate co-operation between teachers and between teaching and non-teaching staff. They are also designed to make it possible for pupils at junior and intermediate levels to work together with various teachers and for pupils and teachers at senior level to get to know each other better than is possible when one teacher takes many different classes. The division of pupils into working units influences the work of the teachers. At junior and intermediate levels, the teachers can change subjects to a certain extent, so as to enable each of them to concentrate on the subjects he or she knows best. At the same time this makes it possible for the pupils to work together with more than one teacher, so that they need not feel completely lost if one of the teachers is taken ill or is away from school for a considerable length of time. At senior level, the organisation of working units with their own teaching staff means that subject teachers sometimes have to teach or assist with subjects for which they are not primarily trained or with which they are not very familiar. Some teachers find this a disadvantage. It is usually an advantage to the pupils, since it saves them having to work together with too many different teachers; until now, this has been one of the problems of senior level.

The working units are the most important point of departure for the practical planning of individual subjects, interaction between teaching subjects and interdisciplinary project work to be undertaken during the year. The staff of each unit are responsible to the headmaster for measures on behalf of pupils with special needs and for pupil welfare generally. It is also the working unit that plans contacts with the pupils' families, the timing of field trips, camp schools and events not forming an integral part of school work, e.g. parties, visits to the theatre or the organisation of bazaars. These fixtures are put into a working plan which in turn forms part of the working plan for the school and school management district.

Through their working plans, the working units provide a natural point of departure for the joint evaluation to which school work has to be continuously subjected by teachers and pupils. This evaluation then forms the foundation on which working plans are revised, school work is reorganised and further plans drawn up.

The main purpose of evaluation is to achieve a steady improvement of school from the pupils' viewpoint. Critical appraisal of the organisation of the working units and an investigation of how pupils and their achievements are influenced by alternative organisational models provide documentation on which to base changes. But the planning of the school year, the selection of teaching materials, working methods, and assistance to pupils with school difficulties also have to be queried and if necessary altered. Course divisions, inter-subject co-operation and project work are also continuously evaluated by the working unit. And the working environment too has to be kept under observation. Are the working unit's practical arrangements really satisfactory? What does the school day look like? Can we improve our school in environmental terms as well? There is hardly any limit to the questions which can be asked when evaluating the activities of a working unit or school. An evaluation must not, however, be made an end in itself. Its purpose —the steady improvement of organisational and working models in pursuit of school objectives as expressed in the Education Act and curriculum—must be fully appreciated by everybody taking part in the evaluation process.

Marks and competence

Since Lgr 80 came into force, marks in compulsory schools have only been awarded at senior level, starting in the autumn term of grade 8. Accordingly, pupils receive marks on four occasions during their compulsory school career, viz. for the autumn and spring terms of grades 8 and 9. Marks are awarded on a five-point scale, five being the highest and one the lowest award obtainable. Three represents the average and the total number of fives and ones in a class ought as a rule to be smaller than the total number of fours and twos. Exact percentages in this respect are no longer stipulated, but marks are still relative, i.e. they are to be awarded with reference to notional averages for the country as a whole.

Compulsory school pupils apply for upper secondary school entrance on the strength of their autumn term marks in grade 9. The spring term marks for this grade comprise the compulsory school leaving certificate and thus confer eligibility for further studies. Pupils cannot be admitted to upper secondary school or to other types of education at the same level, e.g. municipal adult education, until they have obtained this leaving certificate.

Standardised achievement tests in Swedish, mathematics and English are provided to assist teachers in their assessment of classes. These tests indicate the standard required for a three in the subjects concerned, but they are not compulsory. The standardised achievement tests make it possible to assess the level of the class as a whole and to award individual marks on this basis. In addition to standardised achievement tests indicating the level of the individual class, teachers are able throughout compulsory school to set diagnostic tests in teaching subjects or parts of the same, e.g. reading and reading comprehension, spelling, arithmetic or English vocabulary. These tests reveal weak points and gaps in the knowledge and skills of individual pupils, and they enable the teacher to give each individual pupil exactly the assistance he needs. On the other hand, diagnostic tests have nothing to do with the subsequent award of marks.

Elsewhere in compulsory school, marks are replaced by information to parents concerning their children's progress and any difficulties they may be having. As a rule this information is supplied during a 15-minute interview involving teacher, parents and pupil. These interviews can, of course, take more or less than a quarter of an hour, depending on the needs of the individual pupil. They are also arranged in grades where marks are awarded, in which case they are often a source of guidance concerning educational choices for upper secondary school.

Induction and changes of school level

Most children in Sweden attend pre-school for at least one year before starting compulsory school. The three levels of compulsory school have different teachers with different qualifications (see p. 112 et seq.). This means that from the age of 6 onwards, the child has at least three changes of working environment, viz. between pre-school and the junior level of compulsory school, between junior and intermediate levels, and between intermediate and senior levels. Roughly 90% then experience a further change on proceeding to upper secondary school. Special measures therefore have to be taken in connection with commencement of schooling and changes of school level, in order to make school life as smooth as possible for each child.

The practical measures taken when children proceed from pre-school education to the junior level of compulsory school were briefly described on p. 41. Visits, pupil contacts and parental information of this kind occur in connection with every subsequent change of level, and they are especially important when the change of level also involves a change of physical surroundings, as is the case with most children and young persons when they start at senior level and when they go on from there to upper secondary school.

The measures associated with changes of level and changes of school are a joint operation involving the transmitting and receiving teachers, a social welfare officer, a psychologist and an educational and vocational orientation (Syo) officer. From grade 6 onwards, the Syo officer is responsible, together with the teachers, for educational and vocational orientation.

Educational and vocational orientation, working life orientation

In the preceding section we considered the changes of teaching staff and school experienced by pupils as they progress from pre-school education through compulsory school to upper secondary school. Starting with the transition between intermediate and senior levels, these changes are combined with a choice of optional subjects and alternative courses at senior level, and a choice of lines and subjects in upper secondary school. At the same time, the pupils specialise more and more in the educational and occupational route they have decided on for the future. They are supported in this process of successive specialisation throughout their school career, though without being pushed into premature decisions or tied down to narrow educational options.

Educational and vocational orientation (Syo) and practical working life orientation (Prao) are integral features of instruction from grade 1 to grade 9 inclusive. These activities are addressed to all pupils, their purpose being to provide a general introduction to working life and employment opportunities, rather than directing pupils towards a particular choice of occupation. In the course of these activities, pupils get to know Swedish working life, while in upper secondary school they also find out about international aspects of education and employment. Orientation begins in the individual pupil's own school, in his immediate surroundings and in the local community of which the school forms part. It forms an element of school work during lesson time and also includes field trips which are prepared and followed up in school. This, in principle, is the model employed throughout compulsory school. The teacher is in charge and personally supplies most of the information given. The children's parents can also participate, as can employers and employees near the school. From grade 6 onwards, teachers are joined by a special member of staff, the Syo officer, who helps to supply information to both pupils and their parents. The Syo officer also takes part in the planning of field trips and is responsible for the organisation of practical working life orientation (Prao) at senior level and in upper secondary school, where this orientation partly consists of short periods of work experience outside school. The Syo officer also takes part in individual educational guidance interviews with pupils and their parents.

Syo and Prao are important aspects of the work done by schools to counteract sexually biased educational and vocational choices and to

Schools are required to work for sexual equality. For example, pupils of both sexes have to learn the various tasks involved in running a home.

promote sexual equality. Practical working life orientation, therefore, must give young persons an idea of work in different sectors of the labour market and must be planned so as to acquaint boys with occupations where women predominate, and vice versa. At least six and up to ten weeks have to be devoted to Prao during the nine years of compulsory school (cf. p. 92 et seq.).

Free activities

The intermediate and senior level time schedules include compulsory free activities designed to utilise and develop the pupils' potential for activity and contacts. These activities are also designed to encourage pupils to take part in school decision-making processes and to organise their own voluntary associations.

Free activities can also result in the pupils developing life-long interests. Activities of this kind include, for example, sport, music —usually in conjunction with the municipal school of music (see p. 58)—social work, politics and other social affairs, photography and film-making, literature, the theatre and art, practical work of various kinds, information technology and computer science, field biology, journalism, etc. There are no special restrictions concerning the activities to be offered, provided they are meaningful and capable of arousing the pupils' interest. Sport and other club arrangements are among the most popular free activities, together with artistic and social work.

The persons taking charge of free activities are often club leaders or persons employed outside the school. In this way pupils are brought into contact with associations which can support and develop their involvement.

In schools and municipalities which have introduced an integrated school day (see p. 25), free activities occupy more scope than is provided in the general time schedules for the various levels of compulsory school (cf. table, p. 46). The augmented free activities of the integrated school day are also compulsory for the pupils. Accordingly, they entail a certain prolongation of the school day and constitute a form of extended child care.

The content of free activities within the integrated school day is much the same at intermediate and senior levels as in the case of free activities under the time schedules. At junior level these activities are most often conducted in conjunction with leisure time centres. The prolongation of the school day reduces the amount of time for which leisure time centres need to admit pupils outside school hours. The amenities provided within the framework of free activities are to a great extent the same as regular leisure time centre activities. The leisure time centre activities forming part of the integrated school day are very much appreciated by both pupils and parents. Leisure time centre staff, at present, consider them strenuous and more difficult to plan than their ordinary activities.

Municipal schools of music

We have already had cause to mention municipal schools of music in the section on free activities. Most municipalities have a municipal school of music which caters primarily for compulsory school pupils, offering them voluntary instruction in instrumental music. Most of these schools of music are run by the local education committees and employ compulsory school and upper secondary school facilities, usually in the form of special music rooms. The teachers are instrumentalists and qualified music teachers who have been trained to play one or more instruments. The youngest children are taught in groups, while the older children have lessons individually or two or three at a time. School of music activities begin at junior level, where they attract very large numbers of children. There is a falling off of numbers during intermediate and senior levels, but some of the pupils continue their voluntary music education in upper secondary school.

Music school instruction includes group music-making, and the orchestras formed at these schools provide an important element of municipal cultural amenities out of school. Co-operation between voluntary music education and regular school instruction in music, Swedish, foreign languages, art education and handicraft can produce very fine results and can encourage teachers and pupils to develop their work at school.

Upper secondary school

Upper secondary school is an optional continuation of compulsory school and is organised on an integrated, comprehensive basis. It provides further theoretical and practical instruction for students who have completed their compulsory schooling or otherwise acquired similar qualifications. The terms "theoretical" and "practical" refer to the various study routes of upper secondary school, which lead into various sectors of employment and confer both vocational preparation and qualifications for post-secondary education. Like compulsory school, upper secondary school is intended for all young persons, whatever their plans for the future. Upper secondary school as a school for everybody is discussed on pp. 86 and 87.

Upper secondary school shares with compulsory school the aim of promoting the pupils' personal development and helping them to grow into adult society. Upper secondary school is also intended to prepare students for further studies at a higher level and for their future careers and citizenship. Despite its general character, upper secondary school provides a fairly specific form of preparation for vocational activity. It is unique by western standards in that it provides both a theoretical basis for higher studies and practical-theoretical vocational education for a variety of jobs. The balance between practical vocational studies and theoretical studies varies between the 25 lines which upper secondary school has now come to include, but all of these lines, subject to certain conditions, can confer formal general eligibility for university entrance.

Apart from municipal upper secondary schools, there are also other forms of education at this level, e.g. municipal upper secondary adult education (see p. 75 et seq.), labour market training and folk high school. But in terms of instructional diversity, scope and student numbers, upper secondary schools are by far the most important form of education at this level.

Organisation and location

The integrated upper secondary school of today has evolved through the gradual amalgamation of various augmentations of compulsory schooling, viz. the former general gymnasium with its Latin, Natural Sciences and Modern lines, commercial gymnasium and technical gymnasium, practical lower secondary schools and vocational schools offering a host of long- and short-term study programmes for technical and industrial trades, occupations in economic and domestic fields, agriculture, forestry, horticulture, etc.

Organisationally speaking, the integrated upper secondary school came into being in 1971, but by no means all schools can offer every single study route. There are three kinds of upper secondary school in this respect. *General units* have two-, three- and four-year theoretical lines of study, two-year vocational lines and specialised courses of varying duration. These are often large schools, numbering about 1,000 pupils or more. The management of such a school will comprise a headmaster and several directors of studies, one or two of whom will often specialise in school management while one or more will have specific management tasks in addition to their teaching duties. *Type 1 special units* consist mainly or exclusively of vocational lines, while *type 2 special units* consist mainly of two- and three-year theoretical lines. Most of these units have a director of studies in addition to a headmaster, and the largest units may have two or more directors of studies. These special upper secondary school units have been established by pooling the former vocational school and general gymnasium buildings to meet the requirements of the new system. The general units have been planned and built since the integration process was inaugurated during the 1960s. New upper secondary schools are invariably planned in the form of general units offering a diversity of studies.

Upper secondary schools are established in municipalities having sufficiently large populations to support them. Formerly, communities with a general gymnasium would very often also have other post-compulsory schools such as vocational schools, and commercial and technical gymnasiums. For this reason, the traditional upper secondary school towns now have either integrated general upper secondary school units or else special units of both type 1 and type 2. Larger towns and cities often have upper secondary schools of all three kinds. These schools are open to students from other municipalities, whether or not those municipalities have upper secondary schools of their own. The array of lines and specialised courses varies from one municipality or school to another, and so every upper secondary school is attended

Roughly 35 % of all upper secondary school students take three- and four-year theoretical lines. Although it is principally these lines which prepare for further education, all lines may confer general eligibility for higher education.

by some students from other municipalities. Special provisions exist concerning intermunicipal compensation for the admission of such students.

Sparsely populated areas do not have the same kinds of upper secondary schools as urban communities. If the population of upper secondary school age falls consistently short of 300 16-year-olds, the Government may sanction the introduction of special, co-ordinated time schedules. These are applicable to grades 1 and 2 of the three- and four-year lines and of the two-year social line. In exceptional cases, a co-ordinated time schedule can also be applied in grade 3 of a three-year line. Courses in the various teaching subjects have been modified to facilitate the combined teaching of pupils with different specialities. Studies in grades 3 and 4 of the technical line are always concluded at an upper secondary school where this line is fully represented. This is also a common, though not necessary arrangement where the three-year lines are concerned.

Lines and courses

The lines of upper secondary school can be seen from the accompanying table and chart. The table enumerates the lines specified in the Education Ordinance. The chart shows their sectorial identity and duration, the point being that lines can be divided into six sectors, viz. 1) arts and social sciences sector, 2) nursing, social and consumer sector, 3) economic and mercantile sector, 4) technical-industrial sector, 5) technical-scientific sector and 6) agricultural and forestry sector. The lines are usually of two or three years' duration, but the technical-scientific sector also includes a four-year line conferring what is called the upper secondary school engineer's certificate. The four-year line, however, can be concluded after three years with a complete leaving certificate which among other things confers general and special eligibility for admission to an institute of technology. Between them the technical-scientific and technical-industrial sectors have the largest number of student equivalents (places) and the largest number of applicants. Nearly half of all student equivalents are located in these sectors, whereas the agricultural and forestry sector accounts for only 1.5%. The economic and mercantile sector has more than one-fifth of all places, and the other sectors make up nearly one-third.

The lines of upper secondary school can also be divided into three- and four-year theoretical lines, two-year theoretical lines and two-year vocational lines. Taking the country as a whole, over 30% of all students attend the three- and four-year lines, barely 15% take the two-year theoretical lines (admissions here having steadily declined

Equal numbers of girls and boys apply for upper secondary school, but girls are still heavily under-represented in the technical theoretical and technical vocational lines.

except for the social line), and about 55% take the two-year vocational lines. The breakdown of admissions between the various lines fluctuates from year to year, but generally speaking the economics lines and the two-year social line attract the largest numbers of students where specialities are concerned.

As stated earlier, the array of lines and courses varies from one school or municipality to another. But the great majority of municipalities with upper secondary schools have liberal arts/social sciences lines, the three-year economics and natural sciences lines, the four-year technical line and the two-year social and economics lines. Where vocational lines are concerned, the distribution and clerical line, the consumer and/or social services line, the motor engineering line and the workshop line are included in most upper secondary schools with vocational studies. Electro-telecommunications lines are also common.

Upper secondary school apprenticeships

Municipalities with upper secondary schools have been entitled since 1980 to organise upper secondary school apprenticeship schemes. Under a scheme of this kind, a company employee can also be an upper secondary school student, if the company provides him with training for a particular trade in keeping with regulations issued by the education authorities. Organisationally this training is geared to upper secondary school and comes under the supervision of the local education committee, which in matters of this kind acts in consultation with vocational training committees and SSA committees (see p. 72).

Upper secondary school apprenticeship can take the form of long-term or short-term basic training. It consists of individually planned training programmes and can only come into question in cases where the training concerned is not normally available in the form of a line or specialised course of upper secondary school.

The local education committee draws up a syllabus for each individual upper secondary school apprentice, following consultations with the company concerned and with the relevant vocational training committee or SSA committee. If the training takes the form of two-year basic training, it must confer knowledge and skills comparable with those which can be acquired in vocational subjects as taught in two-year vocational lines of upper secondary school. The apprentices are entitled to leave of absence from their employment to take part in upper secondary school studies or other forms of education.

Upper secondary school apprenticeships are distributed between municipalities and accounting years by the county education boards.

Lines of upper secondary school as defined in the Education Ordinance

1. two-year clothing manufacturing line
2. two-year building and construction line
3. two-year distribution and clerical line
4. two-year operation and maintenance line
5. two-year economics line
6. two-year electro-telecommunications line
7. two-year motor engineering line
8. two-year agricultural line
9. two-year consumer line
10. two-year consumer and nursing line (never actually introduced)
11. two-year food manufacturing line
12. two-year music line
13. two-year process engineering line
14. two-year forestry line
15. two-year social line
16. two-year social services line
17. two-year technical line
18. two-year horticultural line
19. two-year woodwork line
20. two-year workshop line
21. two-year nursing line
22. three-year economics line
23. three-year liberal arts line
24. three-year natural sciences line
25. three-year social sciences line
26. four-year technical line

Several of these lines are divided into branches, which in turn can be subdivided into variants. Permissible branches and variants are specified in the time schedules.

Admissions and numbers

The formal qualification for upper secondary school entrance is completion of compulsory school or its equivalent. A compulsory school leaving certificate entitles the pupil to enter any line of upper secondary school whatsoever, irrespective of the optional subjects taken at senior level. Choices are based on information supplied by schools and, if requested by the pupils themselves, interviews with teachers, educational and vocational orientation officers or directors of studies. Usually the pupils state more than one alternative in their applications, giving their alternatives in order of preference. Most applicants

Sectors and lines of upper secondary school, 1984

<table>
<tr><th>Sector \ School year
Line</th><th>2</th><th>3</th><th>4</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Arts and social sciences sector</td><td colspan="2">liberal arts</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">social sciences</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>music</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Nursing, social and consumer sector</td><td>consumer</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>social services</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>nursing[1]</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>social</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Economic and mercantile sector</td><td>distribution and clerical</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>economics</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">economics</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="9">Technical-industrial sector</td><td>clothing manufacturing</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>building and construction</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>operation and maintenance</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>electro-telecommunications</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>motor engineering</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>food manufacturing</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>process engineering</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>woodwork</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>workshop</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Technical-scientific sector</td><td>technical</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">natural sciences</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">technical</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Agricultural and forestry sector</td><td>agricultural</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>forestry</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>horticultural</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>All sectors</td><td>specialised courses[2]
< 2 years</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

[1] Vocational line with a substantial element of theoretical studies.

[2] Specialised courses are taken on completion of compulsory schooling or its equivalent. Advanced specialised courses come after completion of a two- or three-year line of upper secondary school or the equivalent.

are admitted to their studies of first preference. Some pupils accept placement according to their second preference. Those failing to gain admission according to their first or second preference are at liberty to wait a year and then try again. The numbers of students admitted to the various lines are fixed by the Government and the National Board of Education every year. Most admissions are made during the previous spring, but later on a number of additional places are made available for the benefit of pupils who could not be admitted in the first round.

Guidelines laid down by the Riksdag require upper secondary schools to have a total number of places available corresponding to 100% of all 16-year-olds. In reality, there are more places than this, due partly to the large proportion of "mature" applicants, i.e. applicants not coming straight from compulsory school.

Upper secondary school is in principle an optional school in which students are placed according to their own choices, as opposed to a selective school. It is only lines, such as the music line, which for employment reasons have very few places, that have to employ a strict policy of selective admission. Applicants for lines of this kind can outnumber the available places several times over. Owing to the employment situation which has prevailed in recent years and to the tendency for young persons to make new attempts both one and two years after leaving compulsory school, the number of applicants for upper secondary school is a good deal greater than the number of places available. Otherwise the number of applicants and the number of places in various lines usually tally quite well. Students, however, cannot be sure of obtaining their first preference in the upper secondary school nearest home, in which case they will find themselves having to travel to another upper secondary school in the district. Many students have to travel in this way because the line or specialised course they require is not available at their nearest school.

Most young persons apply for upper secondary school immediately after compulsory school. This is the case with about 90% of compulsory school pupils, but the number of compulsory school applicants actually admitted is smaller, because some pupils wait a year in order to be admitted to their line of first preference. Others again defer their upper secondary schooling because they have been given the chance of retaining jobs obtained during the summer. Continuous work experience is a plus point for upper secondary school entrants and is therefore an asset even to pupils who plan on continuing their schooling.

The proportion of mature applicants has risen steadily in recent years and now stands at one-third of the total number. This is particularly true of urban communities, or rather big towns and cities. Applicants who have deferred their upper secondary schooling for one or two years after compulsory school, i.e. 17- and 18-year-olds, are also classified as mature applicants. As from the 1984/85 school year, those applying directly from compulsory school will be given priority over mature applicants. Many mature applicants are about 20 years old and have been gainfully employed for some years. Now that they wish to qualify for more advanced jobs, they choose to study at upper secondary school rather than in municipal adult education. In future they will be referred to adult education if there are no places available for them in the youth education system.

Curriculum

The Upper Secondary School Curriculum is constructed on essentially the same lines as its compulsory school counterpart. It contains goals and guidelines, general directions, time schedules and syllabi. Since there are many different lines and time schedules and, to a great extent, different teaching subjects, as well as branches and variants in higher grades, the Upper Secondary School Curriculum is divided into a host of different parts in which the various lines are described. Only the goals, guidelines and general directions are common to all study routes. The present Upper Secondary School Curriculum, Lgy 70, was updated and reprinted in 1983.

The curriculum supplements may contain syllabi for specialised courses and advanced specialised courses. As the name implies, these courses cover a more restrictive field than lines of study. They can vary in duration from a few weeks to two years, and they cover an extremely wide range of topics, relating for example to local industry or focusing on new and universally applicable techniques, such as computer science. Advanced specialised courses with clearly specified educational objectives, often of a practical nature, are also an alternative to higher education. The past two years have seen a striking increase in the numbers of students admitted to advanced specialised courses.

The curriculum is constantly being changed to a greater or lesser extent. Swedish upper secondary schooling focuses heavily on working life and its syllabi therefore have to be adapted to changes in technology and manufacturing processes. Computer science, which hardly existed at all in upper secondary school before 1970, is now dealt with more or less exhaustively in all lines of study, both as a technology and as a factor in society. But practical experience of course planning and the students' workload can also lead to curricula changes, which in this case are published in the form of supplements. Other changes are made to the curriculum in the form of ordinances and schedules. This is the case, for example, with a new time schedule for the natural sciences line including such alternative subjects as environmental engineering and computer science.

The time schedules for theoretical lines of upper secondary school have changed in recent years as a result of national government spending cuts. There is more pooling of teaching resources between lines of study than there used to be, and some lessons in the terminal grade may be devoted to private study without any teacher inputs.

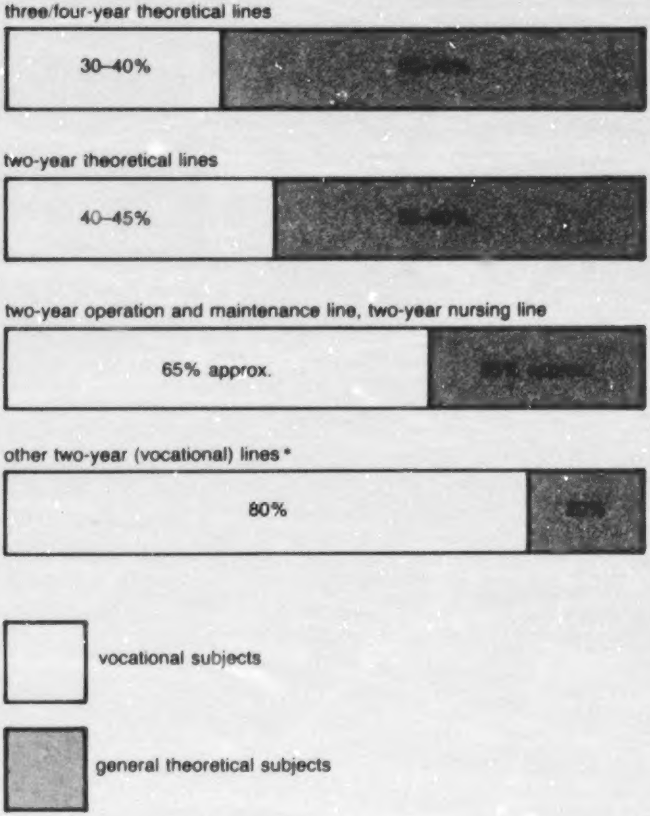
Certain subjects are studied continuously in all lines. This is the case with Swedish, sport and civics or working life orientation. English is compulsory in all theoretical lines and several vocational ones. The two-year vocational lines usually have only a small number of general subjects, but students taking these lines can opt for one or more general subjects with a corresponding reduction of their vocational practice. The commonest options are English, mathematics and technical drawing. General subjects are included in the syllabi for the two-year social line.

Educational and vocational orientation, and also practical working life orientation, continue throughout upper secondary school. Understandably, orientation is more specialised than in compulsory school, and it is made to concentrate on fields relating to the individual student's line of study. In the theoretical lines, however, practical working life orientation continues to be of a general nature. In certain lines, e.g. technical lines, the building and construction line, the distribution and clerical line and the nursing line, relevant work experience at workplaces outside school forms an integral part of studies during the school year. In other lines too, work experience tends to be organised partly outside school when this is possible. As the number of students admitted to vocational lines increases, more and more work experience will probably be organised away from school.

Foreign languages have always occupied a prominent position in Swedish upper secondary schools, but the range of languages has changed. Classical languages, i.e. Latin and still more so Greek, have yielded pride of place to Spanish, Russian, Italian and even non-European languages such as Chinese. Latin, insofar as it is taught, often forms part of a combined liberal arts and social sciences line. English, as we have already seen, is a compulsory or optional subject for the great majority of upper secondary school students.

In spite of this strict division into lines of study, each individual line includes a host of different subjects. Students taking the theoretical

The balance between general and vocational subjects in various lines of upper secondary school



* Students taking these lines can opt for general theoretical subjects for up to 12 periods per week. Many, for example, opt for English, mathematics and/or art education.

lines still have ten different subjects in grade 3, and they have little opportunity of concentrating on fields which are particularly relevant to their plans for the future. Swedish upper secondary schools differ in this respect, for example, from the sixth form of Anglo-Saxon schools.

Because of its diversity of lines and subjects, Swedish upper secondary school has an extremely differentiated curriculum, but this does not imply any specialisation resembling the élite mathematics, sport or foreign languages classes existing in some countries such as the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic. On the other hand, élite sportsmen and sportswomen are able to modify their studies in several lines of upper secondary school so as to accommodate their sporting activities. This often involves prolonging their studies by one school year. Different sporting activities are organised at different upper secondary schools with good training facilities and qualified coaches. Similar modifications, though on an extremely limited scale, can be made for the benefit of students specialising in dance or music (not to be confused with the two-year music line existing at a small number of upper secondary schools). Specialisation of this kind is subject to a rigid selection procedure. The principle is controversial and, as we have seen, is applied on a very limited scale. The students involved number hundreds rather than thousands. Even where aesthetic and practical subjects are concerned, however, there is a tendency in favour of increased specialisation as a means of providing additional student equivalents in upper secondary school and avoiding early unemployment.

Collaboration with the employment sector

As the preceding sections have already made clear, Swedish upper secondary schools focus heavily on the employment sector. This is partly due to the integrated upper secondary school having resulted from the amalgamation of different types of school, including several which formerly provided vocational education. It is also due to the fact that the "new" upper secondary school was intended from the very outset to admit the majority of all 16-year-olds and to provide them with at least two years' schooling. In practice, virtually all pupils completing their compulsory schooling today attend upper secondary school sooner or later. Thus although schooling in Sweden is compulsory for nine years, the great majority of young persons attend school for eleven years or more. Upper secondary school admissions on this generous scale have not been considered economically viable without a large proportion of students entering employment as soon as they leave school. As a benchmark for the municipal expansion of upper secondary schooling, the Riksdag defined a target to the effect that at least 55% of all upper secondary school students should receive practical vocational training.

Rigid controls have been necessary in order to achieve the target thus defined by the Riksdag for the volume of vocational education in upper secondary school. It is less expensive for municipalities to arrange general theoretical instruction, and in many places this instruction is demanded by a majority of students. Now that upper secondary school admissions are being stepped up to give as many young persons as possible the opportunity of meaningful activity after compulsory school, it is above all the vocational lines that are being expanded. Municipalities are receiving an incentive grant for every new student equivalent added to such lines in relation to the number of student equivalents for the preceding year.

The focus on working life entails a great deal of co-operation between schools and trade organisations, together with representatives of the social partners (i.e. trade unions and employers' associations) at both central and local levels. At central level this co-operation relates among other things to the compilation of syllabi and the specification of equipment for practical and theoretical lines of vocational study, the apportionment of student equivalents between different lines, and the overall planning of practical working life orientation and work experience away from school. At local level, educational and vocational orientation in compulsory and upper secondary schools is a major concern. But co-operation of this kind can also relate to the dimensioning of vocational education in the municipality, the implementation of syllabi, the design of facilities, the procurement of equipment and teaching materials, in-service training for school staff, work experience arrangements for pupils in school and elsewhere, upper secondary school apprenticeships and other matters besides.

At regional and local levels, in keeping with the Education Act, there exist planning committees known as SSA committees (SSA being short in Swedish for "co-operation between schools and working life"). These committees, which are affiliated to the county education board and the local education committee respectively, have the task of assisting political bodies in matters relating to links with the employment sector. The SSA committee affiliated to the local education committee is also required to keep vocational education under observation within its municipality. Municipalities with upper secondary schools also have vocational training committees for the sectors represented in their vocational education.

Each SSA committee consists of representatives of the social partners and the public employment service, as well as representatives of the local education committee and of school staff and pupils. The pupils' parents can also be represented. The SSA committees co-operate with the local vocational training committees, insofar as the latter exist. These SSA committees are fairly new, and so different municipalities have acquired very different experience of their activities.

The vocational training committees comprise representatives of employers and employees in the sector concerned, together with representatives of school staff and pupils. Within their various fields, these committees have much the same duties as those of the SSA committees in relation to municipal educational and vocational orientation and vocational education generally.

Marks and competence

Marks in upper secondary schools are awarded every term. Just as in compulsory school, they are awarded on a five-point scale, five being the highest award obtainable and one the lowest. Marks obtained on completion of a two-year line confer general eligibility for higher education, provided the student has taken Swedish and English courses corresponding at least to the two-year social line. In addition to this general eligibility, special qualifications are required in the subjects relevant to the proposed studies and/or practical experience of similar relevance.

Development and experimentation

Proposals for a reform of upper secondary school were prepared by a government commission between 1976 and the early 1980s. This commission had among other things been instructed to co-ordinate studies on a sectorial basis for the first year and then to offer gradual differentiation, though not necessarily immediately after grade 1. Opportunities were to be provided for studies to be pursued on a sandwich basis, in addition to which the commission was to investigate the feasibility of co-ordinating upper secondary schooling with the corresponding features of municipal adult education and labour market training. This commission was appointed shortly before the fall of the Social Democratic Government in the autumn of 1976. The successive non-socialist Governments of the 1970s issued supplementary terms of reference of a somewhat different tenor from the original ones, which greatly compounded the commission's difficulties. The eventual proposals, although put forward while the last of the non-socialist Governments was in power, agreed to a great extent with the main principles of the initial terms of reference. Far-reaching changes were called for in the structure of upper secondary schooling, the organisation of studies and the way in which students were divided up. Co-operation between schools and the employment sector was to be intensified and all students were to receive wider working life orientation and/or vocational education.

Some of these proposals were heavily criticised by the bodies to which they were circulated for comment, but the recommendations for a co-ordination of studies in grade 1 followed by successive differentiation with an increasing amount of vocational specialisation, and also for the co-ordination of different kinds of upper secondary schooling, were on the whole given a positive reception.

There could hardly be any question of the commission's proposals being implemented across the board, considering both their highly controversial character in certain respects and the costs which would have been involved. In the spring of 1984, the Social Democratic Government which had come to power in 1982 issued guidelines for experimental activities in line with some of the proposals contained by the commission's general report. The National Board of Education has been put in charge of this experimentation. All municipalities with upper secondary schools are being invited to participate in the scheme, but participation is voluntary. The proposals to be tested include a co-ordination of studies in grade 1, with admissions to broad study sectors focusing on the technical, social or economic sector of employment. Different types of upper secondary schooling (youth education, adult education and labour market training) are also to be experimentally co-ordinated. Co-operation between schools and the employment sector is to be intensified. Upper secondary school apprenticeships have been placed on a permanent footing. Efforts are also being made to provide all students with work experience. Additional scope will be made available for Swedish and foreign languages. Swedish is already being made a compulsory subject in grade 2 of all lines as from the 1984/85 school year.

The intention is for students to be able, after grade 1, to choose courses of varying proportions and in this way gradually arrive at a suitable educational objective and for each student to lay the appropriate foundations of employment and subsequent education. Thus the idea is for upper secondary schooling to be feasible on a basis of alternation between studies and longer or shorter periods of gainful employment. Intermissions of this kind will then become a natural factor in students' development, not a symptom of failure due to an inappropriate choice of studies.

Preparations are now in progress for the experimental activities, which are due to begin during the 1984/85 school year. These activities are intended to lead to voluntary and successive changes in upper secondary school which will not entail any additional expense.

As grade 3 of upper secondary school is organised at present, students still have about ten different subjects, which gives them little chance of concentrating on fields which they find particularly interesting. Various investigative bodies have proposed or discussed making upper secondary school come to an end at grade 2, i.e. after a total of eleven years' combined compulsory and upper secondary schooling. The third year would then be replaced with a college year in which students wishing to do so could prepare for higher studies or specialise in vocational training immediately after upper secondary school. Students could spend this year on subjects conferring special competence for their intended post-secondary study or vocational route, and they could also concentrate on fields of particular interest. This college year would have more in common with the British sixth form or with the American junior college than with the existing grade 3. The impending experimental scheme may conceivably also include experiments of this kind.

Municipal adult education

Objectives and organisation

The increased opportunities for study available to the younger generation made it necessary to increase and systematise similar opportunities for adults, especially those who could not gain access to more than limited education in the past.

Legislation passed in 1968 made municipal authorities responsible, with effect from about 1970, for enabling adults wishing to do so to study and qualify in subjects taught at the senior level of compulsory school (though English teaching follows the entire compulsory school syllabus) and upper secondary school, or else to receive special vocational education. Studies at upper secondary school conferring formal qualifications, however, are also of interest to persons who have previously attended upper secondary school but need to augment their qualifications for further vocational education.

Municipal adult education is staffed by upper secondary or (senior level) compulsory school teachers or by similarly qualified teachers employed on an hourly basis. Large schools can also have full-time or part-time teaching staff of their own concerned exclusively with adult education.

Municipal adult education can be affiliated to an upper secondary school or to the senior level of compulsory school and is then administered by a special director of adult studies who is directly responsible to the headmaster. Adult education in large municipalities is organised in separate administrative units having their own headmaster and one or more directors of studies.

Lessons often take place in the evenings, using the ordinary upper secondary and senior level schools, with their various facilities and amenities. Large separate municipal adult education units can also have facilities of their own, not least for daytime instruction.

The minimum age limit for municipal adult education is 18 (16 for studies at compulsory school level). Special regulations apply concerning student benefits. Prior to each school year, consultations concerning the array of courses are held with the adult education associations (*ABF*, *TBV*, *Vuxenskolan*, etc.) represented in the municipality. It is also common practice for these various agencies to pool their information resources.

In the admission of students, information concerning the courses available plays an important part, together with educational and vocational orientation and educational guidance. Schools help to ensure that applicants can begin their studies at the right level. Those who are not so familiar with educational activities are helped to plan their studies and develop their study techniques, but they also receive assistance of a more specific nature. These activities qualify for special State grants. Municipal adult education has attracted between 250,000 and 300,000 students in recent years. There is little likelihood of these figures increasing.

To begin with, municipal adult education offered a jungle of courses, a legacy of the very generous State grant regulations applying within the old vocational schools. Qualification for further education or new jobs has gradually come to rank as the foremost objective, and the Adult Education Ordinance lays down that priority is to be given to compulsory school courses and to courses catering for the needs of the labour market. This Ordinance also specifies the subjects in which courses may be organised.

Curriculum

Adult education began by following the compulsory school and upper secondary school curricula. This, of course, involved difficulties, since the curricula are designed for students lacking adult experience in various respects. Since the 1982/83 school year, municipal adult education has had its own curriculum. The educational objectives set for the various teaching subjects correspond to those at the senior level of compulsory school and in upper secondary school, but the content and design of teaching have to be modified to suit the situation of adult students and to tie in with their previous experience. This means, for example, that teacher-supervised instruction occupies less time than in youth education.

Studies are organised in the form of separate courses, with students attending one or more each. The content of particularly lengthy courses, e.g. subjects taught both in compulsory school and in upper secondary school, is divided into stages corresponding to different levels or grades of school. Shorter courses too relate to these stages, depending on the level of instruction. Compulsory school and upper secondary school courses are divided into a basic section, taken by all students, and an advanced section, in which the students choose their own assignments. Thus there are very good prospects of work being organised to suit the needs and interests of each individual student.

A student completing one of these stages receives a leaving certificate, and a certificate can be issued summarising all the studies completed.

Just as in the compulsory school system, every municipal adult education unit is required to draw up a local working plan, specifying the aims of activities and the goals and content of the syllabi. This plan provides the basis on which activities are evaluated prior to every new school year, and it has to be reviewed and augmented as the need arises. Working plans are jointly compiled by school management, teachers and students and are subject to approval by the headmaster.

Basic education for adults

Municipal adult education also includes basic education arranged for adults lacking the elements of reading, writing or mathematics. Basic education is intended for both Swedish-speaking and non-Swedish-speaking persons aged 16 or over, and its purpose is to convey the knowledge and skills forming a necessary foundation of employment and further education. Another essential aim is to develop the students' ability to appraise their own situation and the surrounding community and to encourage them to take part in the process of social development. Basic education also includes elements of social studies and general science. Studies are planned on an individual basis and, where possible, conducted in small groups. Participants number about 10,000 annually, and roughly one-third of them are Swedes.

Outreach activities are organised in housing areas and workplaces to contact adults in need of basic education. These activities are jointly organised by the adult education associations and municipal adult education authorities.

Basic education for adults is financed entirely by means of State grants, which also cover the cost of information and outreach activities, educational guidance, educational and vocational orientation and field trips, social work, interpreting services and supportive instruction. Students are entitled to special adult study assistance.

The "youth guarantee"

Municipal authorities have been required since the mid-seventies to follow up the progress of young persons leaving compulsory school without going on to regular education or permanent employment. This follow-up responsibility continues until the school-leaver is 18. Originally it was confined to identifying the young persons concerned and following their activities so as to be able to intervene with supportive measures if necessary. Since 1980, follow-up responsibilities have been enlarged to include direct measures aimed at channelling young persons into regular education or finding them employment as soon as possible. Since the assignment thus given to the municipalities was aimed at providing all young persons with education or other meaningful activity up to the age of 18 under the auspices of the local education committees, the follow-up scheme came to be known as the "youth guarantee". The local education committees, acting in conjunction with the public employment service and the municipal social welfare committees, are required to guarantee that everything possible is done to ensure that all young persons, and not only those attending upper secondary school, are enabled to develop and live in accordance with the basic principle expressed in Section 1 of the Education Act.

Various follow-up expedients have been tried, e.g. introductory courses, long periods of vocational induction and special "youth opportunities". A new ordinance came into effect on 1st July 1983 concerning State grants towards follow-up measures on behalf of young persons under 18. It is the responsibility of the local education committees to see that suitable measures are taken. An individual plan is drawn up for every young person requiring measures of this kind. This plan includes elements of guidance, education and employment and covers the entire period for which measures may be required. The plan, which is drawn up in consultation with the young person, is continuously reappraised.

Each individual plan is required, for the sake of continuity, to include a follow-up programme occupying not more than six weeks per year. A plan should also include "youth opportunity" employment or some other work experience, alternating with education, in the form of separate courses, upper secondary school courses or municipal adult education courses.

The term "youth opportunity" refers to employment qualifying for State grants, with wages and other benefits paid in accordance with a special agreement between the social partners (i.e. trade unions and employers' associations). This type of employment is usually subject to a maximum limit of six months' duration, but in special cases it can be prolonged by up to five months, making eleven months in all. Within this period, the young person may have obtained permanent employment or entered regular education. Failing this, new "youth opportunity" employment can be arranged. After reaching the age of 18, a jobless youngster can obtain a different kind of paid employment organised by the municipal authorities and funded, for the most part, by the State.

Follow-up activities are mostly geared to upper secondary schools and subject to their management. They can also be integrated with municipal adult education or compulsory schooling, or they can be separately administered. Young persons taking part in educational activities under the follow-up programme are always regarded as upper secondary school students and enjoy the rights which this implies.

Some municipalities have set up special youth centres to organise measures connected with the "youth guarantee", the aim being to make it more attractive even for young persons with extreme school fatigue to attend and take part in a follow-up programme. When activities of this kind are based entirely out of school, however, they have to be designed in such a way as to make young persons genuinely interested in further education of a conventional kind, otherwise the participants are liable to be branded as dropouts instead of being helped.

The activities entailed by the follow-up programme itself are entirely individualised and usually quite unconventional. Apart from educational and vocational guidance, they can also include the development of such basic skills as Swedish and arithmetic and elementary studies for the acquisition of basic knowledge, not least on the subject of social affairs and working life. But practice in the routines of discipline, mealtimes and hygiene can also be included.

The follow-up scheme has been operated with an encouraging amount of success in recent years. Municipal authorities have succeeded not only in establishing contact with the majority of young persons coming within the scope of the ordinance, they have also been able to provide regular activities for a very large proportion of them. Additional funds are likely to be made available for this purpose in the next few years. The fact remains, however, that in spite of the measures thus taken on behalf of 16- and 17-year-olds, the proportion of jobless youngsters between the ages of 18 and 25 is very large by Swedish standards. Education may also come to constitute an alternative for this group, especially if the growth of labour demand lags behind the up-cycle.

Higher education

Official inquiries and policy decisions

Higher education does not really come within the scope of a book dealing with the municipal school system, but it is not out of place to give a brief description of the development and reorganisation of higher education since the reform process began in 1950. The pattern here closely resembles the reform of compulsory and upper secondary schooling, although the process has been more protracted and the proposed changes more controversial.

Teacher education, naturally enough, was the first form of higher education to be affected by the school reforms. Until then, teachers had been trained at colleges providing complete courses of studies for primary and elementary school teachers, as well as a certain amount of practical and theoretical teacher training for prospective subject teachers with degrees and for various other categories.

The 1946 Schools Commission had already recommended the establishment of schools of education to take charge of practically all teacher training, starting with class teachers for junior and intermediate levels and subject teachers for senior level. The reform was set in train, following official inquiries and special legislation, with the establishment of the first school of education in Stockholm in 1956 and a second in Malmö in 1959. This eventually resulted in several important changes to teacher education. Teachers at the various levels of the school system now came to receive their practical and theoretical training at the same school, the practical and theoretical training received by subject teachers was radically prolonged and class teacher training was upgraded by making matriculation or completion of continuation school an admission requirement. At the same time, the schools of education acquired departments of educational research, headed by professors of educational methods. In this way teacher training acquired [illegible] direct link with educational research.

In connection with the travaux préparatoires for the 1962 policy decision on compulsory schooling, the 1960 Teacher Education Commission was appointed to make recommendations concerning the organisation and content of the training to be given to all teachers except teachers of art education, sport, music, home economics, child studies and handicraft (as these subjects are known today), as well as commercial and vocational subjects in compulsory and post-compulsory schools. The Commission recommended thoroughgoing changes not only in teacher education but also in the faculties of humanities and natural sciences where prospective senior level and upper secondary school teachers pursued their subject studies.

Teacher education was now to take place at schools of education in the university cities and in several of the towns and cities which had previously had teacher training colleges. Since then, the schools of education have been integrated with the higher education system and have also been made to include the training of educational and vocational orientation officers, pre-school teachers, recreation instructors, etc.

Following the usual consultation procedure by the bodies concerned and many years' drafting work with numerous twists and turns, a government bill for the reorganisation of studies at faculties of humanities and natural sciences was passed by the Riksdag in 1969.

This legislation provided for fixed study programmes with specified objectives and a successive choice of subjects leading to the BA or BSc. degree. Subject studies were to be brought more closely into line with school requirements. The duration of studies was to be normalised, which in practice meant quite a substantial reduction of time inputs, with BA and BSc. studies taking three years to complete instead of about four as previously. This has gradually equipped teachers of certain subjects with more adequate subject knowledge for teaching purposes, but it has also resulted in newly trained teachers having less command of their subjects. As part of the same process, the two postgraduate degrees were subsequently amalgamated to form a single Ph.D. This too has very often entailed a decline in the quality of Ph.D. theses, owing to the shorter length of time allowed for postgraduate studies.

The reorganisation of studies at humanities and natural sciences faculties presaged a greater element of specialisation in all higher education and the organisational co-ordination of traditional university studies with other higher education.

Official inquiries concerning higher education continued well into the 1970s, mainly under the aegis of the 1968 Education Commission. These deliberations led in 1975 to the passing of legislation on higher education which can be said to be based on the same principle of integration and uniformity of structure combined with a diversity of educational opportunities as was made to apply to upper secondary school and, initially, to compulsory schools as well. As a result, Swedish higher education has a breadth which distinguishes it from the higher education systems of other Western European countries but is perhaps comparable to the system in the US. Where structure and level of studies are concerned, however, comparisons with Eastern Europe are more apposite.

Objectives and organisation of higher education

Section 1 of the Higher Education Act defines the tasks of the higher education system as comprising the conduct of education, research and development. Education is to be scientifically based and must enable students to prepare for various occupations or to develop within the occupations they already have. All education must promote the personal development of the student. One general educational objective is the promotion of understanding for other countries and international affairs.

It will be noticed that compulsory schools, upper secondary schools and higher education have very similar goals. All three are pre-eminently concerned with personal, all-round development and purpose-oriented studies. The higher education system alone numbers internationalisation among its statutory objectives. Where compulsory and upper secondary schools are concerned, this objective is stated in the curricula.

As we saw on p. 15, the higher education system is divided into six regions, with the universities of Stockholm, Uppsala, Linköping, Lund, Göteborg and Umeå as parent units and a number of smaller colleges within each university region. At regional level, a certain amount of higher education—known as municipal higher education—is integrated with the municipal upper secondary schools. The higher education units in the six regions are listed in Appendix 1.

All universities and university colleges provide basic studies in the form of general study programmes in the following five vocational training sectors: 1) technical, 2) administrative, economic and social welfare, 3) medical and nursing, 4) teaching and 5) cultural and informational. The sectorial boundaries and the general study programmes reflect the focus of higher education on the employment sector.

Apart from the general study programmes, there are local and individual programmes and supplementary programmes. Local programmes provide training for activities within a particular occupational sphere, e.g. tourism. Individual programmes, as the name implies, cater for individual preferences. Supplementary programmes, finally, follow on from general programmes. A list of general and supplementary higher education study programmes will be found in Appendix 2.

Undergraduate studies also include separate single-subject courses. These have come to play a very important part in local development work and in-service training (see p. 116 et seq.) following the reform of in-service education and training for the school sector.

Studies have been organised with the aim of facilitating recurrent education, i.e. alternation between education and gainful employment. The completion of a general programme entitles the student to a degree, the name of which will depend on the objectives of the programme.

Undergraduate studies are followed by postgraduate studies, to which persons otherwise acquiring education and experience comparable with basic degrees can also be admitted. Postgraduate studies lead to a Ph.D. degree, the award of which is preceded by a thesis and disputation. Postgraduate studies include development work, in which undergraduate students also take part, for example, by contributing essays and graduate theses—an arrangement which confers practical experience of research methods.

Distinguishing Characteristics of Swedish Schooling

Marks without examinations

Examinations as a criterion of educational achievement long remained a prerequisite of eligibility for further education, and indeed remain so in many fields. It is not until a particular type of educational schooling comes to be demanded by new categories for which it was not intended, i.e. when objectives are altered by revising the conditions attaching to activities, that examinations have to be called into question.

Realexamen for the lower secondary school leaving certificate ceased to be a formal examination long before the actual term was abolished. Matriculation (***studentexamen***) on the other hand, retained its former character, with nationwide written examinations and "censors" to ensure national uniformity of individual standards in the viva voce examinations; this system was retained until the reform of upper secondary schooling in 1966.

When the nine-year compulsory comprehensive school was introduced on an experimental basis, it was quite clear that there could be no question of final examinations. School work, after all, was to be designed in keeping with the aptitudes, interests and needs of the individual pupils, and not in terms of cognitive objectives applying to all of them objectively. The abolition of examinations in the new compulsory school system aroused practically no controversy.

There are no examinations in upper secondary school either. The great diversity of vocational and theoretical studies made it impossible to construct even a highly differentiated—or highly standardised—system of final examinations. Teaching in upper secondary school, just as in compulsory school, has to take into account the differing aptitudes, interests and needs of the individual pupils. The end result of studies must amount to different kinds of knowledge and skill in different lines. It is also bound to entail different types of knowledge and skill and different levels of proficiency within one and the same line of study. The abolition of matriculation did not give rise to any great controversy either, although the purely outward formalities connected with leaving school have remained practically unaltered. Leaving examinations were replaced with standardised achievement tests and tours of inspection by upper secondary school inspectors, attached to the National Board of Education, who are usually experts in particular teaching subjects or occupational fields.

Examinations were abolished without difficulty, but marks on the other hand have been a topic of vehement debate ever since. No other aspect of schooling has been so thoroughly and persistently scrutinised. No government commission reports and proposals have aroused such conflicting reactions as the many reports presented on the subject of marks. But the proposals put forward have led to a gradual reduction in the number of occasions when marks are awarded in compulsory school. In upper secondary school, on the other hand, marks still play a very important part, although they are also being emphatically challenged in many quarters, not least by the students' organisations. A universally acceptable solution has yet to be found.

The opponents of marks maintain above all that marks are unfair and cause the pursuit of knowledge and skills to degenerate into a rat race. The apologists argue among other things that marks are the only more or less dependable instrument that has been devised so far for deciding higher education admissions and for seeding job applicants.

Yet another commission to investigate marks in schools was appointed by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs in 1983. This time the intention is not primarily to prepare for the abolition of marks, but the terms of reference make it quite clear that the commission is to do its best to play down the importance of marks and reduce the influence they exert on pupils' work in school. A search is also to be made for other instruments to be used, for example, in deciding admissions to higher education.

The attentive reader will have noticed that studies at post-secondary level lead to examinations and degrees both at basic and postgraduate levels. One reason for this is that courses for the various marks (credits) are clearly quantified, in the sense that students must have assimilated specified knowledge and completed required reading. Another reason is the importance of a degree for purposes of international comparison. Credits and examinations in their present form will presumably survive in higher education throughout the foreseeable future. They do not give rise to unhealthy competition between students, and they constitute a genuine yardstick of a student's achievements in his or her various degree subjects.

Upper secondary school—a school for everybody

Swedish upper secondary schooling is broadly based and capable of admitting all young persons completing their compulsory schooling. At first it was considered impossible, for financial reasons, to make upper secondary schooling a comprehensive, universal sequel to compulsory schooling. On p. 60 are enumerated some of the various study routes and schools incorporated within the integrated upper secondary school and helping to make up its then 22 (now 25) two-, three- and four-year lines. Upper secondary school was to supersede a host of educational institutions following on from compulsory and lower secondary school. It was to provide meaningful and useful education for, in principle, all 16-year-olds. It was also to provide everybody with a certain measure of general knowledge, creating a common frame of reference for the members of Swedish society, a common denominator which would be a starting point of partnership and co-operation. The reform was intended to confer both educational, social and economic benefits. This is a lofty and uncontested principle, but the goal is difficult to achieve, not least on account of the rigid boundaries between lines of study.

Upper secondary school students are of different ages and do not all come straight from compulsory school. Many of them possess knowledge and experience acquired since they left compulsory school. These "mature" applicants often have more exact, and perhaps also, more limited, objectives than other students who lack their experience of life. There are also pronounced differences in the objectives, interest, aptitudes and needs of students coming straight from compulsory school. Some of them are uncertain about their plans for the future and would prefer to be doing something else instead of attending school, while others feel that they have chosen the wrong line. Where many 16-year-olds are concerned, it is asking too much that they should know what they want to do and decide how to get there. Others do not even realise that this is exactly what is expected of students in Swedish upper secondary schools today. This creates difficulties, not only in subjects specific to individual lines but still more so in subjects like Swedish, English and mathematics which are addressed to most if not all students. The efforts made by schools to inculcate comradeship by making everybody take Swedish, with most people taking English as well, by making everybody take part in sporting activites and supplying everybody with further information about society, higher education and employment are insufficient.

Study techniques are often designed to suit those who are definitely motivated for education, while others find the theoretical subjects too abstract or "difficult". Subjects of this kind bear no relation to their own experience and seem irrelevant to their plans for the future. This in turn leads to dropouts which could be avoided if other working methods were employed. Teachers have experienced just as many setbacks as some of their pupils, but difficulties of this kind have led to a reappraisal of course content and methods which has exerted a beneficial influence on school work. Schools today have a potential for changes designed to make increasing allowance for students' needs.

Nobody, however, can be oblivious to the problems of upper secondary school today. Quite thoroughgoing changes are in fact needed. Yet when the Education Ordinance was amended in the summer of 1983, it was in order to increase the number of lines of upper secondary school to 25. This increase, which one hopes will prove temporary, comes as the result of a continuous evaluation of school work and the change is thus prompted within the permanent school structure. Eventually the first year of upper secondary school will probably be radically simplified, so that students will be enabled to work their way towards an objective which seems realistic and appropriate and is defined in the light of their own experience. A change of this kind would be in keeping with the ideas of upper secondary schooling as a form of universal education which were already expressed when the reform first began to take shape in 1970.

In an attempt to devise a scheme of upper secondary schooling which is more in keeping with the needs of a variegated student population like Sweden's, the National Board of Education, acting at the instance of the Government, has invited all municipalities with upper secondary schools to introduce experimental activities using new models of organisation. A government bill concerning the content and objectives of these experimental activities was put forward in March 1984, and the experiments are to begin in the 1984/85 school year. (See also p. 73 et seq.)

Foreign languages in compulsory school

Only thirty years ago, the study of foreign languages was a privilege confined to students attending lower and upper secondary schools. The great majority of adult Swedes had no knowledge of German, which was the main foreign language taught in lower secondary schools until the 1950s. A change of emphasis in favour of English occurred during the Second World War. When, at the end of the

1940s, the 1946 Schools Commission recommended that all pupils should take at least one foreign language for part of their schooling, English was the language adopted. Elementary schools rapidly followed suit, making English a compulsory subject in certain classes (grades). In the voluntary studies organised by the adult education associations, English rapidly became not only the main foreign language but also one of the largest teaching subjects altogether. The necessity of knowing English and the joy of understanding, reading and perhaps speaking a foreign language were reflected by a demand for instruction long before the word internationalisation came to be used to indicate our links with and dependence on other countries and peoples. Sweden suddenly became a leading country where the teaching of foreign languages to both children and adults was concerned.

Today we do not differ from other advanced countries in teaching all members of the rising generation at least one foreign language. On the other hand, we differ from many other countries, not least in Western Europe, as regards the number of school years for which one foreign language is compulsory. English now has to be taken for at least six, often seven years: from grade 3 or 4 to grade 9 inclusive.

During the gradual reform of compulsory schooling through the introduction of new curricula, the question of a second compulsory foreign language at senior level has invariably been mooted. Should this second language be an option to be taken by most pupils or should it be made compulsory for all of them? Matters are made more complicated by the growing proportion of pupils with home languages (mother tongues) other than Swedish. To immigrant children, English is in many cases not the first but the second foreign language. It is feared that the introduction of a third foreign language might make it more difficult for these pupils to acquire other necessary knowledge and skills in school. Would pupils having Swedish as their home language be exposed to the same risk? Hitherto this question has been answered in the affirmative, but all efforts to create attractive optional subjects in addition to French/German have so far met with limited success. Technology, which fared relatively well as an option, has been made compulsory at senior level. Next time the curriculum is revised, the question of making the second foreign language compulsory will be raised once more, and the answer is no longer a foregone conclusion.

During the reform of compulsory schooling, the relationship between Swedish and English posed a problem to begin with. It was felt that the loss of Swedish periods already at junior level so as to make room for English could impair pupils' command of Swedish. And indeed, when English was made compulsory, Swedish teaching suffered as a result. Many people had expected instruction in a new language to give the pupils a better command of their own language by enhancing their awareness of its construction and its points of similarity or dissimilarity with the new language. Experience showed that this could apply to some of the pupils but by no means to all of them. The time schedules were readjusted so as to restore to Swedish most of the periods that had been taken from it, and English was accommodated by means of less drastic changes to several subjects. Nobody today can really say that pupils learn foreign languages to the detriment of proficiency in their own mother tongue. Any deficiencies in this respect are due to other factors (see p. 45).

Foreign languages occupy a prominent position in upper secondary school, where they serve to emphasise its general educational character. The fact of English being a formal entrance qualification for higher education also helps to stimulate demand for it even on the part of students who are not obliged to take it. English and at least one other foreign language are compulsory in all three- and four-year lines. English is also compulsory in all two-year theoretical and several two-year vocational lines. Students have good prospects of leaving upper secondary school with an active knowledge of at least one and frequently two or even three foreign languages.

Immigrant education

In the previous section we referred to the right, and duty, to learn at least one foreign language. Needless to say, the same goes for immigrants with home languages other than Swedish. Roughly one million out of the total national population of just over eight million are immigrants or the children of immigrants who have come to Sweden since the end of the Second World War. These children are also entitled to be taught their home language. In pre-school education (see p. 41) they are trained to be actively bilingual. This training continues in compulsory school on a voluntary basis. All children whose parents or grandparents speak a language other than Swedish at home are entitled to be taught that language in school. This teaching can continue throughout compulsory and upper secondary school, but children coming to Sweden at an early age usually exercise this opportunity mostly in compulsory school, and at junior and intermediate levels rather than senior level. Instruction at junior level can be provided off the timetable, and the same is also true to some extent at intermediate level. At senior level, however, where many pupils are dependent on school transport, it is difficult to arrange home language instruction without robbing other subjects of teaching periods. Consequently some pupils hesitate to attend home language instruction. However this may be, municipalities with immigrant populations have large numbers of home language teachers. There are something like 80 different home languages in Sweden altogether. The number of languages represented in schools in a single municipality can often be anything between 30 and 50. For some languages, especially Finnish and Serbo-Croatian languages, there are many full-time teachers at all levels of compulsory school and also in upper secondary school.

In addition to lessons in their home languages, immigrant children receive back-up Swedish language lessons. This is a matter of necessity for children coming to Sweden when they have already been attending school in their native country for one or more years. Children in this situation can have difficulty in keeping up with both ordinary schooling, back-up Swedish language lessons and home language instruction, in which case home language is necessarily the first to go.

Back-up Swedish lessons are arranged in both compulsory and upper secondary schools. Compulsory school leavers with a poor command of Swedish can also attend a summer introduction course before going on to upper secondary school. All adult immigrants who do not know Swedish are entitled, like their children, to Swedish language lessons. In the case of immigrant employees, this language instruction can comprise up to 240 hours during paid working time.

In municipalities with large immigrant populations, junior and intermediate level classes can also be organised where immigrant children are taught entirely in their own language. In this case Swedish is taken solely as a foreign language. The instructional objective is to make it possible for pupils eventually to change to a Swedish-speaking class without sacrificing command of their own language. Classes in which the home language is also the teaching language are mainly organised for Finnish children, Finnish being the largest immigrant language in Sweden. A limited number of Finnish-speaking classes have also been organised at senior level. This arrangement is unlikely to be continued, partly for financial reasons, though the representative organisations of Finnish immigrants are campaigning for the retention of Finnish-speaking classes at senior level and, in some localities, for the establishment of similar classes in upper secondary school as well.

By international standards, Sweden is very generous in teaching Swedish as a foreign language (i.e. Swedish for immigrants) and in home language instruction for immigrants. This generosity is reflected both by legislation on entitlement to instruction and by educational expenditure. It is also reflected by teacher education. The teaching sector of higher education includes a special immigrant language study programme for persons wishing to teach their home language. Teachers of Swedish can specialise in Swedish as a foreign language, in which case they receive special subject-oriented and methodological training for the purpose.

Religion—just another general subject

Legislation passed in 1951 assures everybody in Sweden of complete religious liberty. Nobody can be excluded from education, employment or any appointment on grounds of religious belief or disbelief, and nobody is required to belong to the established Church of Sweden or any other denomination against their will. Children automatically become members of the Church of Sweden provided both parents are members but are at liberty to opt out of it at any time.

Schools also have to be prepared for a variety of religious and non-religious beliefs among their pupils. They cannot teach the Lutheran creed with the aim of inculcating this particular creed among their pupils, and they are not *allowed* to do so either. Religious education must be objective in the same sense as the teaching of civics. It must teach the pupils about religion, but it must not train them in a particular religion any more than civics is meant to inculcate political opinions.

In a pluralist society like Sweden, it is natural for religious education to rank as a general subject on the same level as history or civics, for example. It is equally natural for Christianity to form the nucleus of religious education, since our culture is so deeply rooted in the Christian Church. But generous scope must also be given to other religions and non-Christian convictions. It is reasonable for all pupils to attend religious instruction, because this instruction is of a general and educational nature and cannot be considered offensive or obtrusive by anybody. But it is also necessary for schools to respect different views entertained by their pupils and to provide scope for discussion and analysis in these matters. Schools must equip the rising generation with a foundation on which to base their own viewpoints in matters of belief as well as politics.

The time schedules of the 1980 Compulsory School Currriculum (Lgr 80) do not specifically mention religious education. Instead they refer to "social subjects". A note on the time schedules specifies these subjects as geography, history, religious education and civics. The

Upper Secondary School Curriculum (Lgy 70) restricts religious education to certain lines of grade 3 only. Otherwise religious instruction forms an integral part of civics teaching. The curricula clearly reflect the status of religious instruction as part of the teaching of history and civics, to which it is to be geared whether teaching concerns the past or present, Sweden or Italy, the US or the Soviet Union.

Syo and Prao

Careers teaching designed to help pupils choose their future occupation or education began in earnest during the 1940s in elementary schools. At that time it took the form of vocational guidance provided by careers teachers, i.e. elementary school teachers who had attended a short further training course. These careers teachers co-operated with officers from the youth department of the employment service. The information and guidance provided in this way were addressed to pupils in the terminal classes of elementary school, the aim being to enable them to choose an occupation and find suitable jobs.

During the experimental phase of the nine-year compulsory comprehensive school, vocational guidance was reorganised as educational and vocational orientation for all pupils. In the case of "practical" pupils, the theoretical orientation provided through civics teaching was combined with practical orientation outside school. Guidance preceding vocational choice was now replaced with orientation concerning education, occupations and the labour market. Vocational orientation changed character already during the experimental period and, subsequently, during the 1960s. Initially, these activities, provided in the form of vocational guidance, were intended to make it possible for pupils to choose an occupation, and perhaps too a form of education leading up to it. The decision thus taken was regarded as permanent, almost lifelong. The actual process of choice was often combined with psychological ability tests, and practical vocational orientation too was a form of aptitude testing from the viewpoint of both pupil and host company. It was a form of placement activity directed by the employment service, which devoted heavy resources to it. Vocational guidance, subsequently renamed vocational orientation was at that time very loosely connected with school instruction.

Today educational and vocational orientation (Syo) and practical working life orientation (Prao) form natural elements of all teaching from grade 1 of compulsory school to grade 3 of upper secondary school inclusive. In compulsory school, this orientation does not focus on the future occupational decisions of the individual pupil. Instead it is of a purely general nature and is aimed at equipping pupils with a constantly broadening knowledge of education, occupations and working life. Orientation prior to the choice of senior level courses and lines of upper secondary school is concerned with *educational* choice. It is stressed that *vocational* choice as such comes later and will in all probability relate to an occupational field and one's first job, as opposed to a lifelong career. The purpose of practical working life orientation is to provide all pupils with a certain amount of practical contact with working life and to acquaint them with conditions at a workplace and relations between fellow employees, superiors and subordinates. They find out a little about rates of pay and other benefits, trade union activities and what is required of themselves. Working life orientation of this kind and with this purpose is not aptitude testing in the old sense, but it may nonetheless contribute towards a growth of young persons' awareness of themselves, their interests and their opportunities.

In upper secondary school too, educational and vocational orientation is a generally instructive aspect of teaching, but due to the differing characters of the many lines of study, it tends to focus more and more on limited sectors of working life and on more clearly defined post-secondary education routes. In certain lines, work experience outside school relates to particular occupations. Practical working life orientation in other lines, especially the theoretical ones, on the other hand, is of the same general character as in compulsory school.

Great efforts have been made to enable teachers to take part in working life orientation of the kind described here. Courses and in-service days have been devoted to these questions. Teachers can request leave to devote up to three weeks to work experience outside school every year on full salary. Work experience is also made available in direct conjunction with the beginning and end of the school year.

The special training given to educational and vocational orientation (Syo) officers has become increasingly sophisticated, and their duties have tended more and more to involve planning educational and vocational orientation in conjunction with teachers and if necessary taking part in individual guidance, rather than assuming sole responsibility for these aspects. On the other hand, Syo officers, acting in collaboration with the employment service, are directly responsible for the organisation of practical working life orientation. The employment service also provides them with continuous information and in-service training concerning the labour market, and in this way they constitute a resource within the school system for up-to-date information in this field.

Educational and vocational orientation and practical working life orientation have sometimes been viewed askance by school management and teachers, on the grounds that matters, in their opinion, of no present relevance have been allowed to reduce the time available for the real task of schools, viz. to convey basic knowledge. The clear emphasis placed by the 1980 Compulsory School Curriculum on educational and vocational orientation and practical working life orientation as part of the general school instruction and a growing realisation in upper secondary schools that the same is also true at this level, have the effect of making these activities a necessary and interesting part of school work as a whole at all levels, and something for which all members of the school community must assume active responsibility.

Schools and the disabled

The regular school system

Swedish schools are conspicuous in their efforts to accommodate pupils and employees with disabilities of various kinds. The basic idea behind all modifications for the benefit of the disabled is that nobody capable of following instruction in an ordinary compulsory or upper secondary school class or of taking part in adult education or basic education for adults should be denied the opportunity of doing so on account of physical disability. Nor should a person wishing to teach or hold some other school appointment and capable of doing the work involved be prevented from doing so by physical disability. At municipal level there are elected committees for the disabled whose task is to safeguard the interests of this category. Every such committee includes one or two local education committee representatives. Regular meetings take place between the committees for the disabled and representatives of school staff and elected officers.

When school buildings are planned and designed, steps are taken to ensure that pupils with disabilities of various kinds, e.g. physical disabilities, hearing or vision impairments and allergies, will be able to use them. It is not the practice to select schools and supply them with special equipment relating to these disabilities. Equipment of this kind is distributed to all schools. Disabled pupils must be able to attend their nearest school, together with other children and young persons from the locality where they live.

For the convenience of the physically disabled, entrances are fitted with ramps and classrooms, laboratories and workshops, dining halls, etc., are built without thresholds. Schools with several storeys have lifts for physically disabled or temporarily injured pupils and employees. On every storey there is at least one specially adapted toilet which can be entered by a wheelchair. Some classrooms are equipped with hearing loops and the teacher is provided with special aids to make it easier for the hard of hearing to take part in lessons. Braille books and special typewriters make it possible for visually impaired pupils to attend lessons in ordinary classes.

There is widespread awareness of allergies connected with different kinds of materials. Allergenic materials are avoided and cleaning operations are aimed at the prevention of allergy. The plants and animals likely to be present in laboratories, workshops and other rooms are also taken into consideration. For example, contrary to popular custom in many Swedish homes, birch twigs are not brought indoors during the spring and Christmas trees are often made of plastic. Failing this, the Christmas tree is positioned in a hall where it can be avoided by allergic pupils and employees. Dogs and cats and other furry animals are not allowed on school premises. Pupils and employees with food allergies are served special food. There are also special menus for diabetics and gluten allergics. Those who are allergic, for example, to eggs or citrus fruits or to fish receive alternative meals on days when food of this kind is served.

Special arrangements are made to modify old school buildings not originally designed for the convenience of disabled pupils. State grants are payable towards the cost of technical supportive measures on behalf of pupils with hearing or vision impairments and pupils with physical disabilities.

Teachers qualifying for remedial duties (see p. 104) can specialise in teaching pupils with speech, hearing or vision impediments. Pupils with severe physical disabilities are allotted an assistant for all situations in which their disability makes help necessary. State grants are payable towards the salaries received by these assistants.

Pupils with intellectual handicaps used often to be placed in special remedial classes [illegible], if they were severely handicapped, in special schools for the mentally retarded. Remedial classes hardly exist any longer. Special schools for the mentally retarded are steadily diminishing in number through the integration of classes of this kind with ordinary compulsory and upper secondary schools. In this way the mentally retarded enjoy the stimulus of associating with children of normal ability. They can have lunch at school together with other children and they can attend sport and music lessons, for example, and eventually perhaps other lessons as well, in ordinary classes.

In schools with integrated classes for the mentally retarded, special arrangements are made for the benefit of handicapped children. These children need a great deal of elbow room, they need to be able to rest during the school day and they are often more dependent than other children on the services of a school nurse and school psychologist. They require heavier teaching inputs as well, and teachers are specially trained for these duties, often by means of remedial teaching courses subsequent to their basic junior teacher training.

One result of Swedish policy concerning the disabled is that most schools have physically disabled pupils. Large municipalities also have several schools with integrated classes for the mentally retarded. This makes heavy demand on the teachers, who of course are primarily responsible for disabled pupils being genuinely integrated in the school and class concerned and feeling that they are on equal terms with other pupils. The county councils have consultants who help to plan school equipment and who can also provide teachers with information, advice and in-service training. At the beginning of every school year, regional in-service days are organised for teachers whose classes include disabled pupils.

From the children's point of view, integration means healthy children growing up together with disabled classmates. In this way they learn to understand the meaning of disability to the disabled individual. They grow accustomed to helping a disabled person in a natural manner and they are made responsible for ensuring that a disabled classmate is not left out of things in between lessons. The far-reaching integration of pupils with physical and intellectual handicaps is rooted in an optimistic view of their development potential and the possibility of improving their stamina, and also in an optimistic view of the capacity of other persons to show consideration and understanding. It is already obvious that integration influences the understanding and sense of responsibility shown by healthy children towards those who are less fortunate. It is equally obvious that teachers regard it as their self-evident duty to endeavour to integrate disabled pupils in the school and classroom community. In doing so, they develop methods which benefit the whole of school work.

Special schools for the disabled and mentally retarded

Although, as explained in the preceding section, Swedish policy is emphatically based on offering instruction and schooling in the general school system even to children and young persons with relatively severe handicaps, more institutional forms of care cannot be dispensed with entirely. This type of care is provided in special schools for the blind, deaf or deaf and dumb, and to some extent also for pupils with very severe physical disabilities combined with other handicaps and in schools for the severely mentally retarded. Most of these schools are run by the county councils.

In special schools there is a clear tendency for schooling to be integrated with municipal schools for children and young persons. Special schools are developing into resource centres for disabled persons themselves and for the school system. These centres can supply materials and books on loan, they can provide short-term treatment and they can supply experienced teachers and advisors.

For many years now, the pupil population of special schools has fluctuated between 700 and 800, and the developments now in progress may lead to a further reduction.

As has already been made clear, schools for the mentally retarded are tending to become more closely integrated with ordinary schools, primarily by means of integrated classes for the mentally retarded. But there are also separate schools for the mentally retarded. These schools have the resources to provide senior pupils and adults with a certain amount of vocational education in addition to more general training aimed at enabling them to lead as normal an everyday life as possible. The number of pupils attending separate schools and classes for the mentally retarded is less than one per thousand of the total number of children and young persons in the relevant age groups.

Special schools of all kinds have for the most part been boarding schools, but efforts are now being made to transfer accommodation to houses and flats away from school and in this way to enable pupils to live as independently as possible.

The proximity of special schools to the ordinary school system is also reflected by the process whereby the regional counselling formerly attached to special schools is now being transferred to the county education boards.

Social Benefits and Pupil Welfare

Free tuition, etc.

Compulsory schooling, upper secondary schooling, municipal adult education and basic education for adults are all completely free of charge. This is one of the qualifications for State grants. Free activities too are free of charge to the persons taking part.

Compulsory school pupils receive teaching materials free of charge, though in some cases these materials are returnable. Upper secondary school and adult students can be required to pay for certain teaching materials (except where basic adult education is concerned), but it is very common for municipalities to defray the greater part of such expenses in upper secondary schools as well. Consumables such as paper and pencils are usually the only things which students have to find for themselves.

Free compulsory school benefits also include school transport when needed. There are certain restrictions in this respect, to the effect that pupils must have a certain minimum distance to travel to school or the road conditions involved must be dangerous to small children. Minimum distances are fixed by municipal authorities. Upper secondary school students living more than 6 km away from school qualify for State travel allowances. All municipal schools provide free transport, usually by car, for disabled pupils.

School meals are free of charge in compulsory schools and, in most municipalities, in upper secondary schools too. Special recommendations exist concerning the composition of school lunches, the principle being that they should provide at least one-third of the daily nutritional requirement and all important nutrients. Pupils are seldom given a choice of food, but special meals can of course be organised for those suffering from allergies (see p. 95) and also for children whose religion prohibits certain kinds of food.

Student benefits

All financial benefits for students come under the Study Assistance Act. Provisions concerning the implementation of this Act and other matters are contained in the Study Assistance Ordinance. We will confine ourselves here to the most common forms of study assistance within the regular municipal school system.

Compulsory school pupils do not usually receive any financial student benefits. Schooling is free of charge and families receive basic child allowance until the child is 16 years old. For families with three or more children, this allowance is also payable for students aged between 16 and 19. A pupil attending compulsory school beyond the age of 16 qualifies for study assistance in the form of extended child allowance.

Young persons between the ages of 16 and 20 receive study assistance comprising a grant (which is comparable to an extended child allowance) for those continuing in their schooling after compulsory school. This grant is not subject to a means test and is thus paid to all upper secondary school students under the age of 20. Upper secondary school students can also obtain supplementary benefits to cover the cost of boarding accommodation or travel, as well as certain other benefits which are subject to a needs test.

Students aged 20 or over and attending upper secondary school or its equivalent are entitled to essentially the same types of student benefit as students under 20.

Adult students receive several different forms of study assistance, depending on the scale of their studies and the loss of earnings involved. Benefits include hourly study assistance, daily study assistance and special adult study assistance. These various forms of support make it possible for adults to take part in adult education while still retaining an acceptable economic standard.

Pupil welfare

The ultimate responsibility for pupil welfare rests with the headmaster, but each individual teacher has a share in responsibility for measures even outside the teaching context. Pupil welfare centres round the working units which, under the Education Ordinance and the Compulsory School Curriculum, constitute the organisational unit on which the planning and implementation of school work and day-to-day pupil welfare (see p. 52 et seq.) are based.

When the measures planned and taken within the working unit prove insufficient, special measures of pupil welfare have to be resorted to.

Special pupil welfare involves the participation of school health care staff, the school social welfare officer, the school psychologist and remedial teachers. The present section deals with the duties of the first three staff categories. Remedial teaching forms the subject of a special section (see p. 103 et seq.).

Special pupil welfare in schools is planned and conducted by the pupil welfare conference. In addition to a school management representative and the teachers connected with each individual case, this conference is also attended by the school doctor and/or school nurse, the school psychologist and school social welfare officer and the SYO officer. Discussions relating to individual pupils are also attended by the pupil concerned and his parents or guardians. The teachers and other staff taking part in discussions concerning individual pupils or groups of pupils are not allowed to divulge information on the subject to outsiders. In this respect they come under the Secrecy Act, which also provides safeguards against the improper disclosure of personal matters. The pupil welfare conference is responsible for general preventive measures relating to all pupils, a particular group or grade, and for measures relating to an individual pupil or group of pupils requiring special support.

School health care is addressed to all compulsory and upper secondary school pupils, but not normally to adult students. This health care is intended to be mainly of a preventive nature, its purpose being to monitor the pupils' development, to preserve and improve their mental and physical health and to inculcate healthy living habits. School health care services are run by school doctors and school nurses, in accordance with standing instructions issued by the National Board of Education. These officials have regular reception hours in schools. Large schools have a full-time nurse with daily reception hours. Understandably, a great deal of the time occupied by these receptions is devoted to minor emergencies arising in the course of the school day. When more extensive attention is required, however, the pupil concerned has to be referred to a doctor elsewhere.

The school health care staff take part in the planning and design of school facilities and monitor the menus for school meals so as to ensure that they comply with nutritional requirements. They also take part in the planning and conduct of instruction concerning habit-forming substances (tobacco, alcohol and narcotic drugs), sex and personal relations and physical welfare. The school doctor is responsible for ensuring that pupils receive statutory immunisation as provided for children of school age, and he also helps to administer immunisation ad hoc in connection with major epidemics and suchlike.

The school social welfare officer, as the name implies, is mainly direct discussion groups made up of pupils and teachers or pupils, parents and teachers together. Groups of this kind are a relatively common arrangement for resolving conflicts in class. The social welfare officer is the school liaison officer—together with the teachers concerned—in relation to social welfare authorities and similar public bodies, and also the police if necessary. The school psychologist, school doctor and teachers co-operate closely with county council mental welfare agencies for children and young persons.

The school health care staff, social welfare officer and psychologist assist the school management and the relevant teachers in planning and conducting certain kinds of teaching (see above). As we have already seen, they help to draw up action programmes for pupils requiring special supportive and other measures. The investigations conducted in such cases are thus a matter of teamwork between teachers in everyday contact with the pupil concerned and specialists of various kinds.

Many municipalities have school assistants whose duties are mainly of a social nature and do not require any special training. These assistants are mainly employed in compulsory schools, especially at junior and intermediate levels. They help pupils in practical matters, organise leisure activities or assist in doing so when there are special recreation leaders on the staff. They give pupils a shoulder to cry on, accompany injured children to hospital and look after lost property. The school assistant makes a very important contribution to the pupils' well-being, to their parents' security and, of course, to the maintenance of a pleasant atmosphere in school.

Recreation leaders are mainly employed in schools which have introduced the integrated school day (see p. 25). They help the pupils to organise free activities when the latter are run by the pupils themselves without a special leader. They make sure that the necessary materials are available and they administer contacts between school, the municipal recreation committee and, not least, voluntary associations.

It will be observed that Swedish schools have large numbers of non-teaching staff who have direct and specific dealings with the pupils. The school management has to take special care to ensure that all these employees, together with the teachers, make up viable working teams which have a clear idea of their objectives and have drawn up a joint policy and concrete plans concerning the best way of promoting the pupils' all-round development and giving them the best possible return on the time spent in school.

Support for pupils with special needs

All types of municipal school can provide extra support for pupils/students requiring it. Supportive measures are essentially the same for all age groups, though practical arrangements vary and sponsorship can also do so, depending on the age of the student concerned. We will confine ourselves here to measures undertaken on behalf of compulsory school pupils.

The 1980 Compulsory School Curriculum lays down that the school reinforcement resource (see p. 34) is primarily to be devoted to measures on behalf of pupils with various kinds of school difficulties. Some of these measures can be of a general nature, addressed to all pupils. This applies, for example, to the division of classes and working units into smaller groups for certain lessons. Subdivisions of this kind at junior level are made above all for Swedish and to some extent for mathematics and other subjects. The number of group periods is reduced in each succeeding grade. In senior grades, classes are normally divided into groups for experimental and practical subjects, but the same type of arrangement is also possible for Swedish and English conversation practice or when the pupils start a new foreign language. Group divisions of this kind are beneficial not least to pupils experiencing difficulties in their school work. In this way the teacher has a better opportunity of observing pupils, discovering their problems and helping them to put things right. Group arrangements, however, must not impinge on the scope available for remedial instruction for pupils in difficulty. The fact is, however, that this instruction has diminished in volume now that an earmarked State grant no longer exists for the purpose.

The subdivision of classes into groups tends to be taken further at senior level than is common at the other two levels of compulsory school, on the grounds that pupils are supposed to be better off working in smaller groups and in this way tend to be less disruptive. But it is also arguable that work in smaller groups is very often more of a relief to the teachers than it is to the pupils.

The reinforcement resource is intended to maximise each individual pupil's chances of educational success. This makes it necessary—fully in accordance with the curriculum—to start by planning the measures needed for pupils in difficulty before going on to take such general measures as the available resources permit.

In addition to the pupil welfare staff described in the previous section, measures addressed to pupils in difficulty also involve the participation of remedial teachers as part of the staff in a working unit.

Remedial teachers collaborate with other teaching staff and work in close contact with the individual pupil's family. A remedial teacher has received advanced subsequent training, his or her basic qualifications usually being those of a junior or intermediate level teacher but sometimes those of a subject teacher.

Here, in brief, are the resources available for helping pupils in difficulty

The first and most important measure to be taken is a consistently planned *allocation of resources* at municipal and school level and finally within the working unit. At working unit level, funds have to be reserved not only for more continuous *co-ordinated remedial teaching*, with the remedial teacher attending ordinary class lessons to help those pupils requiring a great deal of support, but also for additional measures as and when required by the same pupils.

Arrangements of this kind can involve temporary *private tuition* for the pupil or the organisation of a *small teaching group* comprising children from the working unit or from two or more working units. Pupils can spend the whole of the school day or certain lessons in a group of this kind, which it is stipulated must be a temporary arrangement. In this way they can be given intensive help in overcoming their difficulties, e.g. in reading or arithmetic, returning after a time to full participation in the work of their regular class.

A *special teaching group* can be set up for pupils with serious physical disabilities, pupils with pronounced social and emotional disturbances or other pronounced school difficulties. It is sometimes hard to draw a line between a small group of the more temporary kind referred to above and a special teaching group. The latter, however, is for pupils with more serious school difficulties and they therefore need to be retained for a longer period. But work in the special group is always aimed at enabling the pupil to return and adjust to an ordinary class. Just as in the temporary small group, pupils can attend the special group for all subjects or certain subjects only.

An *adjusted course of studies* is another way of helping pupils in difficulty. This means that a pupil is exempted for some time from certain lessons so as to be able to devote more time and effort to others. At senior level, an adjusted course of studies can also mean that the pupil spends some time at a workplace away from school and attends lessons only a few hours per day or one day per week. This form of adjusted teaching is liable to result in the pupil losing touch with school, and it must therefore be purely temporary and very restrictively applied.

Pupils whose problems are primarily of a social nature or due to unfavourable social conditions can be put in *special day schools* which, in addition to providing instruction, take care of children for a large part of the day outside school hours. Pupils receive several meals here and have an opportunity of taking part in constructive leisure activities. Special day schools are therefore staffed by a teacher/administrator and remedial teachers, a matron and a recreation leader. Intensive measures are also taken by a school psychologist, a social welfare officer and other pupil welfare officers. This work is done in close collaboration with the individual pupil's family, where possible, and together with social welfare authorities and child and youth mental welfare authorities. Special day school is designed not only to help the pupil educationally but also if possible to improve his social background. Referral, attendance and reinstatement in the ordinary class are based on close co-operation between teachers taking the class and the staff of the special day school. It is above all the youngest children who are referred to special day schools and can benefit most from such an arrangement, but intermediate level pupils are also admitted. On the other hand this arrangement is very reluctantly applied to senior level pupils. The special day school is intended as a way back into the school community, not as a means of escaping from it.

Some of these measures for children in difficulty at school are limited in scope and merely imply helping a child to cope better with his schooling. Other measures are more radical and can easily inspire the pupil with a negative view of himself and his prospects. Accordingly, very careful investigations are conducted before taking more drastic measures such as transferring a pupil to a special teaching group or a special day school, measures which of course mean temporarily separating the pupil, to a greater or lesser extent, from his classmates. Following a transfer to other surroundings, the pupil's development is monitored very closely so that the effect of the measures taken can be evaluated and any mistakes can be put right.

On p. 94 et seq. we saw that extensive measures have been taken to integrate pupils with disabilities of various kinds within the ordinary school system. Measures on behalf of children with school difficulties are based on the same fundamental view of individual development potential as measures on behalf of the disabled. Measures taken in or as close as possible to the pupil's normal surroundings provide a comprehensive stimulus which will help to enhance the pupil's self-confidence and sense of belonging and help him to overcome his difficulties.

Administration and Allocation of Costs

Political and administrative bodies

Administratively speaking, the structure of the Swedish school system is unmistakably hierarchic (see table below). The decentralisation of decision-making powers to municipal level which has been in progress since the 1970s has not entailed the abolition of any of the State authorities. Ever since the end of the 1950s, when the county education boards were set up, the school system has had no less than four (or, depending on definition, five) politically elected levels or agencies with politically appointed directorates.

At the top of the hierarchy comes the *Riksdag,* which makes the overriding decisions concerning the goals and general guidelines of the school system, educational legislation, financial frames and general organisation. Direct responsibility for putting the decisions of the Riksdag into effect is vested in the Government as represented by the *Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.* Government decisions often take the form of enactments and ordinances, but the Ministry is also responsible for the basic allocation of the monies voted by the Riksdag.

A great deal of implementation is entrusted by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs to the *National Board of Education* (*Skolöverstyrelsen, SÖ*) which is an executive authority with a politically appointed directorate, the members of which are appointed by the Government and represent the political parties in the Riksdag, the central employer and employee organisations, municipalities and county councils. The directorate of the National Board of Education is chaired by the Director General and Deputy Director General, both of them appointed by the Government. This, at all events in formal terms, makes the Board relatively independent of the Ministry.

The main tasks of the National Board of Education comprise planning, the drafting of budget requests, continuous revision of curricula, incentives and general guidelines for research, development work, in-service training, and the evaluation of school work at national level.

The Board is responsible at this level for the implementation of the policy decisions made by the Riksdag and Government, i.e. for the achievement of the goals defined for school activities.

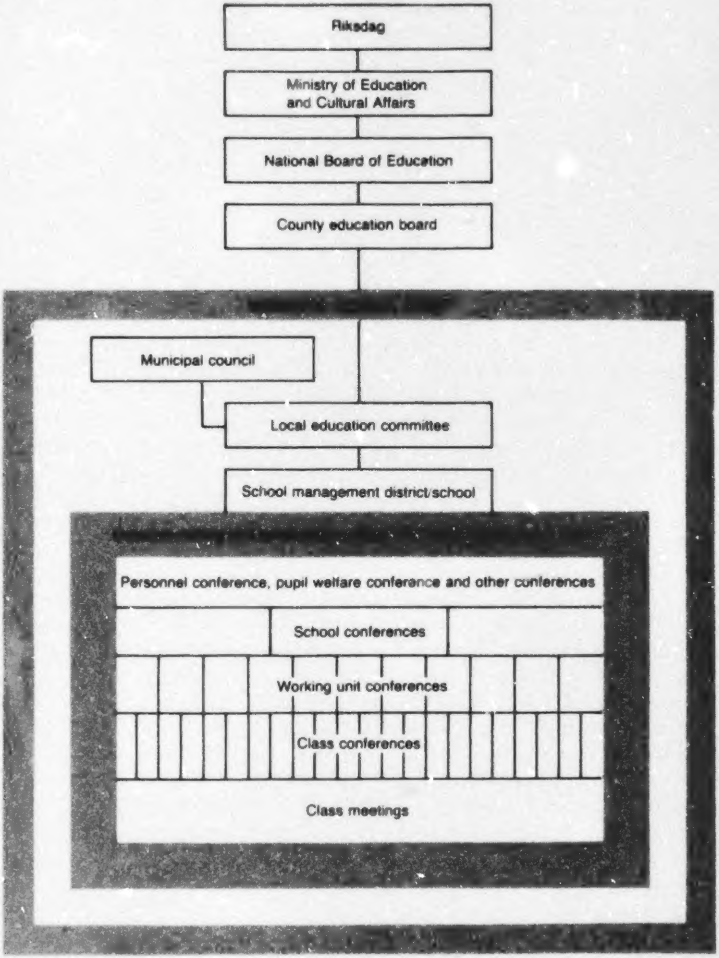
The National Board of Education is divided into four departments, for compulsory schooling, upper secondary schooling, adult education and administration, respectively. In addition, it includes a planning secretariat, an information unit and audit section directly responsible to the directorate.

Subordinate to the National Board of Education at regional level are the *county education boards*, of which there is one in every county. These boards also have politically appointed directorates, and their chairmen are appointed by the Government. The county education board secretariat is headed by the County Inspector of Schools, who is also appointed by the Government and is assisted by one or more inspectors together with officials and other experts.

The tasks of the county education board are essentially similar to those of the National Board of Education at national level. In addition, the county education board appoints headmasters and directors of studies within the municipal school system. It is also reponsible for direct contacts with schools and it has certain duties of a purely practical nature in connection with in-service education and training. Other duties include the inspection of schools to ensure that work at municipal level complies with current regulations and the policy laid down by the Riksdag (see p. 36).

At municipal level, the *local education committees* are responsible for the direct political management of schools. Thus the local education committee shares, at local level, the responsibilities of the National Board of Education for ensuring that the goals of school activities are achieved and that uniform and equal standards are maintained within the school system. The political balance within the committee reflects the state of the parties in the municipal council, by whom its members are appointed after nomination by the party organisations. The local education committee meets once or twice every month (between 10 and 20 times a year). Important questions dealt with by plenary sessions of the committee comprise budget requests to the municipal council, major school building projects, the long-range planning of municipal school organisation, the appointment of a chief education officer and other senior officials, and guidelines for the alllocation of funds to schools. Since the municipal council controls municipal finances and is responsible for a large share of educational funding, the local education committee often has to comply with directives issued by the municipal council or the municipal executive

Administrative structure of the Swedish school system


Riksdag
Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs
National Board of Education
County education board
Municipal council
Local education committee
School management district/school
Personnel conference, pupil welfare conference and other conferences
School conferences
Working unit conferences
Class conferences
Class meetings

Source: The National Board of Education picture sequence "The School System in Pictures", Liber Utbildningsförlaget 1981 committee. In this way the activities of the local education committee are governed by both national and municipal funding agencies.

The local education committee secretariat is headed by the chief education officer, whose task, under the authority of the committee, is to co-ordinate the activities of municipal schools, draft representations to the municipal council concerning funding over and above State grants and allocate funds between schools in the municipality in keeping with the committee guidelines. In addition, the chief education officer is required to conduct or commission necessary investigations. By authority of the local education committee, the chief education officer and his assistants or the headmasters appoint most teachers and other school staff. The committee secretariat has handling and clerical staff whose duties include planning and research, budgeting and follow-up, purchasing and other matters. Large municipalities retain educational experts for various fields and a teaching materials depot which, for example, administers the procurement and production of teaching materials, distributes information about materials and takes part in local in-service education and training activities. Often the secretariat also has a personnel department of its own which appoints teachers, attends to other matters relating to teaching staff and co-operates with the central personnel administration unit in the municipality where other personnel affairs are concerned. School meals and school transport are also among the activities planned and directed by the secretariat, to which senior pupil welfare and school health care officials are also attached.

The existence of so many policy-making levels in Sweden may be part of the reason why the reform of the internal work of schools has made slow headway compared with the organisational reforms. The senior State officials are appointed for a period of six years (e.g. the Director General of the National Board of Education) or indefinitely. Consequently they are not replaced when there is a change of government. The state of the parties at municipal level may differ from the situation in the Riksdag. The chief education officer is not appointed for a limited period and therefore frequently stays on until retirement.

Schools and school management districts

As has already been made clear, there is a complex administrative superstructure imposed on the genuinely executive agencies within the school system, i.e. individual compulsory and upper secondary schools. References have already been made to school management

Physical education, sport and open-air activities must give all pupils an outlet for their energies, and also knowledge about body and health care.

concerned with social welfare in schools, while the school psychologist provides psychological expertise in schools. It used to be quite common for these two officers to divide up duties between them in such a way that the psychologists were stationed principally in schools with junior and intermediate level grades while the social welfare officers worked mostly in senior level schools, upper secondary schools and adult education. Nowadays the aim is to achieve collaboration between psychologist and social welfare officer on the one hand and, on the other, school management, teachers and other school staff in all types of school and at all levels within the municipal school system.

Apart from general measures relating to the school atmosphere and special investigative and remedial measures on behalf of children requiring special assistance, the psychologist and social welfare officer have other duties which are less obvious. It is often the social welfare officer who, together with the headmaster or director of studies, co-operates with pupil committees and other school organisations in the everyday context. The school psychologist arranges in-service training for the school staff concerning new experiences and research findings relating to measures on behalf of the pupils, in the teaching context or elsewhere. Psychologists and social welfare officers both organise and districts at compulsory and upper secondary school levels as administrative units and the actual fora of school activities (see pp. 34 and 44). Sections below (p. 119 et seq.) deal with decision-making procedures and co-determination at local level. A few words will be said here concerning the decision-making powers of headmasters. It is common practice for the local education committee to delegate executive decisions to the official or officials responsible for their implementation, which in the great majority of cases means headmasters. This applies, for example, to the appointment of staff within the school management district, organisational details, the distribution of resources and so forth. The great majority of a headmaster's decisions, however, are made in compliance with the Education Ordinance, which makes him expressly responsible for decisions. Many of the headmaster's decisions are preceded by negotiations with the staff under the Co- determination Act (*MBL*) and other deliberations.

The apportionment of expenditure between national and local authorities

The State grant to the school system as a means of achieving uniformity and equality of standards has already been described on p. 32 et seq. That section also dealt with the basis on which the State grant is computed for every municipality. Schools represent the largest item of annual expenditure in practically all municipalities, accounting as they do for between 20 and 25% of total net costs. in the State operating budget, the education sector, accounting for about 12% of all expenditure, comes second to social welfare but ahead of the defence sector.

In view of the powerful State administrative superstructure of the local school system, it is perhaps interesting to note that the running costs of schools are more or less equally shared between State and municipality where compulsory schools are concerned, while the State has a slightly larger share of upper secondary school expenditure and bears an appreciably larger share of the cost of municipal adult education and basic education for adults. Thus all in all, the State assumes a greater share of financial responsibility for schools than municipalities. Nevertheless, the local education committee and the other municipal educational authorities have the last word in determining the quality of municipal schooling. This is not only a question of the generosity of municipal allocations for teaching materials and pupil welfare, for example. A lot also depends on the ability of the local education committee and the municipal administration to co-operate with and enthuse school management and other staff, pupils and parents in connection with school activities and in pursuit of both universal and local objectives.

School Staff

Staff categories

Understandably, teachers constitute the largest staff category in schools. For a long time the non-teaching staff was confined to school management (headmasters), caretakers, clerical staff and cleaners. But as the tasks of school have come to be seen in a new light, schooling has been prolonged, the content of the school day has been made more differentiated and the pupil structure in all types of school has grown more comprehensive, one new staff category after another has acquired essential duties in the school sector. The table below summarises the most common types of appointment or staff categories in schools today. It also shows the duration of the training received by the various staff members and the types of school or levels at which different categories serve.

One cannot help noticing how many different kinds of teacher education there are in Sweden and how widely the duration of training can vary, from two to four years or more. Some teachers (class teachers) are qualified to teach all or most subjects at the junior or intermediate level of compulsory school. Others (subject teachers) are qualified to teach two or three subjects at the senior level of compulsory school or in upper secondary school. Teachers of practical and aesthetic subjects are usually qualified to take just one subject, usually in both compulsory and upper secondary school. Teachers' backgrounds also vary a great deal in other respects; some teachers have acquired extensive job experience, while others have spent the whole of their life as pupils, students or teachers in the education sector. In order to recruit teachers with a wider experience and knowledge of society as a whole, work experience is now credited as a qualification for admission to schools of education. Experience of this kind will probably come to be stipulated eventually as an essential entrance qualification for all types of teacher education.

Ever since the school reforms began, government commissions have been framing proposals for the reorganisation of teacher education. The biggest change to have occurred so far was the conversion of the former teacher training colleges into schools of education. Also in this connection, far-reaching changes were made to the education of subject teachers (see pp. 80 and 81). The most recent important government commission on teacher education submitted its report, entitled *Teachers for a School in Transition*, in 1978. The thoroughgoing proposals contained by that report have not yet resulted in a government bill, but the viewpoints expressed by the commission have already had a beneficial effect on teacher education, for example by stressing the importance of work experience outside the school sector.

School managers, i.e. chief education officers, headmasters and directors of studies, have for a long time been almost exclusively recruited from intermediate level (elementary school) teachers or subject teachers. Recruitment has been broadened in recent years, however, and school management now includes persons from practically all the teacher categories enumerated in the table below. The school managers of Swedish compulsory and upper secondary schools usually have much larger areas to administer than their counterparts in other countries of the western world, since schools are frequently grouped together for administrative purposes into school management districts, each of which has a single school management.

Rates of pay are as variegated as training and other aspects of teachers' backgrounds. The lowest rates are paid to pre-school teachers, recreation instructors and junior level teachers. Subject teachers are best paid. School doctors and psychologists, however, earn a good deal more than any teacher category with the possible exception of *lektors*, i.e. subject teachers with doctorates or the equivalent (see p. 35). Except for chief education officers and the headmasters of upper secondary school, school management do not earn much more than the best paid teachers.

Teacher salaries are fixed by means of central agreements which apply throughout the country. Local agreements are concluded on behalf of other staff categories, but where large categories are concerned, outline agreements are concluded between the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and the union organisations. These outline agreements recommend maximum and minimum rates of pay for caretakers or local education committee handling officers, for example, depending among other things on the nature of their duties and the degree of independence and responsibility which their work entails.

Apart from differences of training and competence, pay and other benefits and promotion prospects, teachers are also subject to different provisions from other school staff where working hours are concerned. The great majority of staff categories have an ordinary 40-hour week and statutory or agreed holidays. Teachers' working hours

School appointments and training required

Appointment	*Type/level of school*	*Training/years*	*Remarks*
Pre-school teacher	fö (grl)	2.5	
Recreation instructor	leisure time centre, special day school	2.5	
Junior level teacher	grl (grm)	2.5	
Intermediate level teacher	grm (grh)	3	
Subject teacher	grh, gy	4	
Remedial teacher	gr, gy	2.5-4+0,5-1	
Child care teacher	gr, gy	3	
Art education teacher	gr, gy	3	Preparatory training, one year or more.
Teacher of commercial and clerical subjects	gr, gy	1	Commercial education and several years' practical work experience required for entrance
Home language teacher	fö, gr, gy	2	
Home economics teacher	gr, gy	3	At least 6 months' preparatory training.
Sports teacher	gr, gy	2	Longer training is being discussed.
Music teacher	gr, gy	4	
Handicraft teacher	gr, gy	1	Vocational training and work experience required for entrance.

Textile teacher	gr, gy	3	At least 6 months' preparatory training.
Teacher of industrial and skilled trades	gr, gy	1	Vocational training and several years' work experience required for entrance.
Nursing and care teacher	gy	3.5–4.5	Basic and subsequent training.
Headmaster, director of studies	gr, gy	2.5–4	
Chief education officer	gr, gy. vux, (hs)	2.5–4	
School doctor	fö, gr, gy	5.5+4-5	
School nurse	gr, gy	2+1	
School psychologist	fö, gr, gy	5	
School social welfare officer	gr, gy	3.5	
Educational and vocational orientation (Syo) officer	gr, gy	3	

All types of school are also staffed by administrative personnel, caretakers, dining hall staff, cleaners, school assistants and recreation leaders. There are no formal training requirements for these staff categories, but all of them receive appropriate training which is frequently comprehensive.

Abbreviations:

fö = pre-school education
gr = compulsory school
grl = junior level of compulsory school
grm = intermediate level of compulsory school
grh = senior level of compulsory school
gy = upper secondary school
vux = adult education
hs = higher education

are stated in teaching periods (hours) per week and range from 29 hours per week for 40 weeks in the year (junior and intermediate level teachers, teachers of vocational subjects and teachers of practical and aesthetic subjects, etc.) to 24 hours per week (subject teachers at the senior level of compulsory school) or 21 hours per week (upper secondary school subject teachers). These figures, together with the time needed for preparing lessons and attending to other individual duties, conferences and other collective duties, are considered to equal the working hours of employees with a 40-hour week and normal holidays.

Teachers' working hours are a topic of intermittent discussion. It is asserted in many quarters that teachers ought to have the same working hours as other employees and that all their service should take place in school. It seems likely that staff co-operation, teacher-pupil co-operation and more specialised pupil welfare would benefit from such a rearrangement of teachers' working hours. Hitherto the idea has been opposed by teachers' unions, and municipal authorities have also been skeptical, for purely practical reasons: if all teachers were to spend the entire working day in school, this would demand a substantial augmentation of facilities. And yet it seems likely that teachers' working hours will be reorganised within the not too distant future.

In-service education and training (INSET)

Compared with most other countries in the western world, the staff of Swedish schools have good, indeed very good, opportunities of undergoing advanced further training on full salary and at no direct expense to themselves.

Schools were already empowered during the experimental phase of the nine-year compulsory comprehensive school to organise in-service days, primarily for teachers, as part of the school year. These in-service days are now a regular feature of INSET in all schools. Up to five in-service days can be arranged every school year.

A system of further training for teachers was also introduced during the experimental phase, when elementary school teachers (now known as intermediate level teachers) were given the opportunity of studying at university or attending specially designed courses, with virtually no reduction of salary, to qualify as subject teachers. During the build-up of the nine-year compulsory school, this further training was an important means of recruiting sufficient numbers of subject teachers for senior level within a relatively short period. Eventually other teacher categories also became entitled to salaried further training.

As schools have developed, the focus and content of INSET have been transformed. To begin with these activities were exclusively addressed to teachers and were concerned with the content of individual subjects or with subject methodology, the principal aim being to enable teachers to comply with the new curricula. Not enough was done to transform school working methods.

Gradually more and more staff categories have come to be involved in INSET, both on in-service days and in courses of various kinds. It is now the usual practice for all school employees to attend in-service days, the content of which has emphatically shifted away from single-subject training to inter-subject co-operation and interdisciplinary project work. New features of the curricula still play an important part. Changes in work organisation and working methods have been accorded increasingly generous scope. Co-operation in working teams or by other means has come to the forefront where methods are concerned. In-service training is also being made to focus heavily on the participants' self-appraisal and personal development.

School management long remained the Cinderella of the INSET ballroom, but there now exists a two-year sandwich course for school management which includes crash studies away from home and work experience away from school. The aim of this training is to develop the managerial talent of school management and to broaden their social horizons. Pre-employment school management training and induction training for new school managers can also be organised, using State allocations for in-service training.

As stated earlier, INSET during the thirty years of reform in the school system has to a very great extent been guided by the need to equip teachers with relevant subject knowledge and to make them aware of curricular changes. The State has had the last word concerning INSET opportunities and expenditure. Individual teachers could apply for leave of absence for studies and further training, with virtually no loss of salary. Local education committees had no control over the content of studies or the award of sabbatical leave.

As from 1st July 1982, most of the funds previously applied to financing individual studies on partial or full salary have been transferred to municipal level, where they are administered by the local education committees. Since then the local education committees have been fully responsible for planning INSET activities in municipal schools. These activities have subsequently acquired much closer links with local development work. As part of the local working plan (see p.

51), each school draws up a scheme of priorities for local development work, specifying short-term or more long-term objectives. The INSET in which teachers and other staff take part must be in keeping with this development work.

Most INSET activities take place at universities and colleges. Every term the higher education establishments present regional catalogues of courses which may provide suitable in-service training for school staff. The content and duration of these courses are determined by the general directions and priorities of the central school authorities, by the supply of suitable teachers at the higher education institution concerned, and, not least, by the needs and preferences expressed by school staff and local education committees.

In order for the INSET offered and the selection of participants for courses to be relevant and produce good results, it is important for schools and local education committees to draw up long-term plans for their development work, clearly describing the INSET conducive to the attainment of the objectives specified. It is equally necessary for the higher education institutions to organise new courses and modify existing ones in keeping with school requirements.

Apart from the INSET activities organised by higher education institutions and municipal authorities, there are also courses and conferences arranged by other agencies, e.g. the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and its county branches, certain publishing companies—primarily those issuing most of the official publications in the school sector (curricula, codes of regulations, etc)—and the trade union or professional organisations of school employees.

Conferences

The staff meeting used to be the forum with which the headmaster conferred in matters relating to school work, and it included all teachers.

Today, however, the staff meeting has been superseded by the staff conference, which includes all school staff and not just teachers. The staff conference is not a trade union assembly with collective bargaining powers, but it exerts a great deal of influence on the practical planning of school activities. The conference is chaired by the headmaster, who appoints one of the participants to minute the proceedings.

Schools also have a number of other conferences (see table on p. 108). The pupil welfare conference was dealt with on p. 100. The working unit conference is the nucleus of planning and implementation within a working unit. It involves all unit staff and also has important tasks in connection with pupil welfare. The pupils are represented at the working unit conference when it discusses matters relating to school work, but not when individual pupils are being discussed. The tasks of the working unit conference can be taken over by the class conference, especially when the circumstances of individual pupils are being discussed and the pupils' educational achievements are being reviewed. Class conferences are not attended by pupil representatives.

Subject conferences involve teachers of a particular subject or group of subjects and are held to discuss planning, projects and the selection of textbooks or other teaching materials. The subject conferences make recommendations to the headmaster concerning textbooks which they feel the local education committee should adopt for use in schools. Pupils are also represented at these conferences.

The school conference is a new type of conference assembling representatives of school staff, pupils and parents, either within the individual school or for the entire school management district. This conference serves among other things as a means of conducting the consultations incumbent on a headmaster (see p. 121).

The various conferences employ much the same procedure as the staff conference, i.e. the headmaster or some other person chairs the meeting and a secretary is appointed to keep the minutes.

Conferences can occupy a great deal of time at certain periods of the year. If, for example, the teamwork of a working unit is to be made to run smoothly, time should be set aside for a weekly conference. In official computations of teachers' working hours, conferences have been estimated to occupy an average of four hours per week or sixteen hours per four-week period. Overtime compensation becomes payable if these figures are exceeded. So far it has been unusual for the estimated conference time to prove insufficient. It is fair to say that Swedish schools offer generous scope for consultation, and the practical opportunities are not lacking if there is a genuine desire to develop co-operation between teachers and other staff, to establish teamwork and to involve pupils in the planning of school work.

Consultations and co-determination

Rights of co-determination

School staff, like all other employees, have since 1977 been entitled by law to participate in decision-making. This right is codified in the Co-determination Act (*MBL*).

The three most important provisions of this Act concern powers of negotiation for union organisations, and the duty of employers to negotiate and to supply information.

Employees' associations are entitled to negotiate with the employer concerning an individual member who is or has been in the employer's service. The employer is similarly entitled to request negotiations with the employees' organisations in such matters. Negotiations of this kind can, for example, relate to unfair treatment suffered by an individual employee or to environmental conditions at the workplace, but they can also be more concerned with questions of principle.

It is the duty of the employer to take the initiative in negotiating with an employees' organisation with which he has a collective agreement before deciding a question involving important changes to the activity or business concerned. Furthermore, the employer is required to keep the employees' organisations continuously informed of the productive and financial development of the business and of the guidelines of personnel policy.

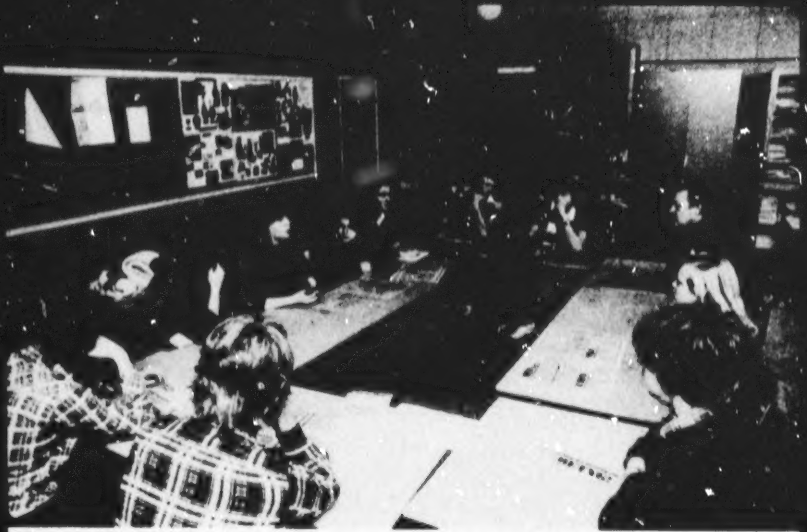
The wording makes it clear that the Co-determination Act is designed primarily for workplaces engaged in production in the more tangible sense. But the Act applies to all workplaces where there are collective agreements between employer and employees, and its purview thus includes both national and local authorities and their activities.

Co-determination negotiations take place at various levels within the school system and are convened by the headmaster, a representative of the local education committee or a representative of the municipal executive committee, depending on where the decision is to be made. Certain questions, e.g. budget proposals and the final adoption of the budget, can involve negotiations at all three levels before a decision is made.

The duty of information is no less important than the duty of negotiation. The information supplied by the headmaster to the school representatives of the trade union organisations and by the chief education officer to the employees' municipal representatives can, when properly organised, constitute a form of continuous consultation between employer and employees and can have a highly beneficial influence—educationally, socially and in material terms—on the development of the municipal school system.

The duty of headmasters to consult pupils and parents

Pupils and their parents are not regarded as school employees for the purposes of the Co-determination Act, and they are therefore unable



Pupil committees as well as class meetings are important means of giving pupils opportunities of co-determination and democratic training.

to take part in co-determination talks together with school staff. But the decisions made concerning school activities affect the pupils and, indirectly, their parents and it has therefore been judged necessary to give pupils and their parents an opportunity of influencing decisions before they are actually made, even though this cannot be achieved through negotiations.

It is the duty of the headmaster to keep pupils' and parents' representatives continuously informed of questions of the kind included in co-determination talks with staff and also concerning other questions which may be of particular interest to pupils and their parents. This information can lead to consultations, in the course of which viewpoints may emerge which influence the impending decision. Information and consultations of this kind can take place at the school conference (see p. 109) and have to be held at least twice every term.

Other forms of pupil co-determination

The consultations required of the headmaster are not the most important form of pupil co-determination in school. The most important thing, of course, is what directly transpires in the course of school work, for example in class meetings or through the joint planning of school work by pupils and their teachers.

The Education Ordinance requires class meetings to be held at all levels of school. These meetings involve discussions, with varying degrees of formality, between the pupils in a class and their form master or mistress concerning matters of importance to the class. Class meetings are also frequently used as a means of training pupils in the conduct of meetings. One pupil will then take the chair, while another will be secretary and keeper of the minutes. The teacher participates on the same terms as the pupils and, like them, may not speak without permission from the chair. The development level of the class meeting varies a great deal from one school to another and even between different classes or working units in the same school. At its best, in terms of both content and form of procedure, the class meeting is an important means of democratic training.

Most schools have a pupil committee. This comprises elected representatives, usually one or two per class or several for a working unit. The committee has an executive to attend to day-to-day matters and its activities include regular discussions with the headmaster. A member of the school staff is often specially assigned to keep in touch with the pupil committee and in this capacity to help the pupils with such purely formal tasks as accounting and bookkeeping. The class or working unit representatives form a decision-making body, i.e. a kind of parliament in relation to the executive, which can be compared to a government. There is also a pupils' organisation at national level, though by no means all pupil committees are affiliated. The national organisation often adopts standpoints in matters of school policy, e.g. marks, standardised achievement tests in upper secondary schools or working life orientation, and it is officially consulted in connection with major policy recommendations.

Parents too have their local parents' associations or parent-teacher associations. The latter, which also include representatives of the school management and staff, are the more common variety and represent a bid by parents to co-operate rather than making representations on a "them-and-us" basis. At national level the National Home and School Union serves among other things as a consultation body in connection with all major policy decisions in the school sector, and in other contexts as well it adopts official standpoints on educational policy. The Union organises information and in-service training activities for parent-teacher association officials at municipal level.

In some municipalities the local education committee holds regular deliberations with representatives of the parent-teacher associations concerning, for example, budget requests, the planning of school buildings, road safety for school children, school meals or arrangements for camp schools and long excursions.

Trends

Decentralisation and political management by objectives

In terms of spending cuts and dwindling resources, the Swedish education system does not deviate from the western world generally. The remarkable thing in Sweden is that this policy of austerity is being combined with a vigorous decentralisation of decision-making powers.

Decentralisation in schools—a process whereby practical decisions concerning the deployment of financial allocations and the organisation of activities are made either by the local education committee or by the headmaster and working units of the individual schools—has already been discussed in previous sections. In practice, these decisions tend to be made far more often by the headmaster and working units than by the local education committee, and of course they have more immediate consequences for the individual pupil than the local education committee's decisions.

Politically speaking too, a decentralisation is under way. Politically elected sub-municipal committees are being set up to increase active citizen participation in politics, i.e. to enhance political awareness and with it the political control of municipal affairs. The aim here is to increase government by political objectives. This form of political decentralisation is still at the experimental stage, and no firm conclusions have yet been reported. The question is currently being investigated by a government commission set up for the purpose. The terms of reference issued to this commission suggest that sub-municipal committees, in one form or another, have come to stay.

As stated earlier (p. 27), the decentralisation of important decisions to local education committees, individual schools and working units is liable to reduce the impact of centrally defined educational objectives. Decentralisation to sub-municipal committee level is designed to increase government by political objectives by enabling local elected representatives to influence decisions at purely local level, but the question remains whether this will actually result in deliberate political management by *national* objectives.

On p. 106 et seq. we discussed the many political decision-making levels in the Swedish school system. Sub-municipal committees represent yet another level of decision-making. General policy decisions can thus be differently interpreted not only in different municipalities but even within different parts of one and the same municipality. This means that a great deal of information and political training will be needed in order for government by political objectives at national level to have a proper impact at local level. But there is an obvious risk of general government by political objectives diminishing in importance at the same time as local political control—mostly financially based—is increased through widening political involvement at local level. The measures taken by local education committees must logically be made to focus even more on creating for the municipality and its various educational units a common policy which is fully in line with the overriding political objectives.

Schools and the struggle against youth unemployment

Youth unemployment is just as serious a problem in Sweden as in other Western European countries and the US, although the proportion of unemployed aged under 25 is not as dauntingly high in Sweden as, for example, in the United Kingdom or the Federal Republic of Germany.

During the severe crisis of the early 1930s, education was resorted to as a means of imparting content to the enforced leisure of the unemployed. During and after that period, voluntary adult education expanded rapidly. Schools, on the other hand, were not allotted any vital part in the struggle against unemployment. The expansion of the school system was a result of rising living standards; parents could now afford to let their children attend school for longer periods.

In the struggle against youth unemployment today, increased education is regarded throughout Western Europe as the most important means of providing unemployed persons with something more than temporary occupations.

During the past few years, schools have acquired a rapidly increasing share of responsibility for outgoing activation measures, combined with a certain amount of further education, for young persons not voluntarily continuing their education after compulsory school. Swedish schools are now responsible in practical terms for all young persons up to the age of 18. Other measures to combat youth unemployment may invest schools with a certain amount of responsibility up to age 20, although statutory responsibilities as yet are confined to the undereighteens. In other Western European countries too, the main focus of countermeasures involving elements of education is on 16- and 17-year-olds. Thus at the same time as individual compulsory school age in most countries has been extended to the age of 16, schools have acquired responsibility for all 16- and 17-year-olds as well.

There are two principal ways in which schools can take charge of young persons not spontaneously proceeding to upper secondary school. One of them is for the local education committee, which is responsible for the organisation of these measures, to refrain from linking them to schools and instead to admit the young persons concerned to more or less genuine workplaces, providing them with a certain amount of further education on special premises, without any real links with schools and without any collaboration or pooling of resources in terms of teachers and other staff, school meals, leisure activities and so on. Another method is to attempt to integrate measures on behalf of these young persons as rapidly as possible with regular teaching and leisure activities in schools, and also to make regular apprenticeships available, partly through co-operation with the employment sector. This latter arrangement requires far greater efforts on the part of upper secondary schools to revise their activities and adapt to the same broad range of pupil categories as compulsory schools.

The first of these two methods is liable, in spite of generous inputs, to create a group which will sooner or later be put out of the running for employment. If the second approach is adopted, there is at least a chance of young persons who are genuinely at risk adjusting to school and society in general and perhaps indeed becoming conscious and constructive opponents of the seamier sides of the community.

Examples of both approaches are to be found in Sweden, but here as in other countries, people are beginning to realise the danger involved by the first approach. Up to 90% or more of those leaving compulsory school annually in Sweden proceed spontaneously to upper secondary school. The group requiring special measures in order to avoid rapid "elimination" is a very small one. This small group is highly vulnerable and requires a great deal of special treatment in order to acclimatise to ordinary upper secondary schools. Both the content and working methods of schools, leisure activities and social welfare measures will have to be designed in such a way that everybody will find them meaningful and attractive. This means, for example, that schools will have to co-operate with the employment sector so as to give young persons a chance of acquiring hands-on experience of regular employment. It also means that schools will have to learn to activate all young persons and to give them a share of influence and responsibility with regard to activities during and after the school day. Above all, school work must be made to focus on the entire development of the individual. It must be designed in such a way as to prepare students both for employment and further education, for family life and community work, for meaningful leisure and for the assumption of political responsibility. Upper secondary school is no longer a school whose task is to prepare a minority for higher education. Nor must it be a school providing desirable education solely for the quite sizeable group of young persons who already know what they want from school and the future. Upper secondary school must be a school for everybody, even for those who to begin with have no faith in life itself and still less in school.

Equal opportunities in theory and practice

The Education Act and the curricula require Swedish schools to promote the equality of the sexes. Schools must also help to give immigrant children the same opportunities of education and employment as native Swedish children. It is the duty of the local education committee to ensure that these two equality complexes are genuinely provided for in the everyday life of schools.

Local education committees and school managements are doubtless aware of their duties with regard to establishing equality between groups which are equal officially but not in practice. There are, however, other forces, not least traditional and sexual stereotypes, which operate in the contrary direction.

Equality is very much a question of background. Young persons from educated surroundings are attracted to more advanced studies and receive more support in pursuing them than young persons from homes with less of an educational atmosphere. Young persons from the first type of home get off to a better start in life. This applies to both sexes. Efforts have been made to eliminate the social bias in higher education by establishing the greatest possible equality of status between lines of upper secondary school where higher education entrance qualifications are concerned. These efforts are frustrated, however, by educational choice and the possibility of obtaining high marks in upper secondary school favouring those who are already privileged.

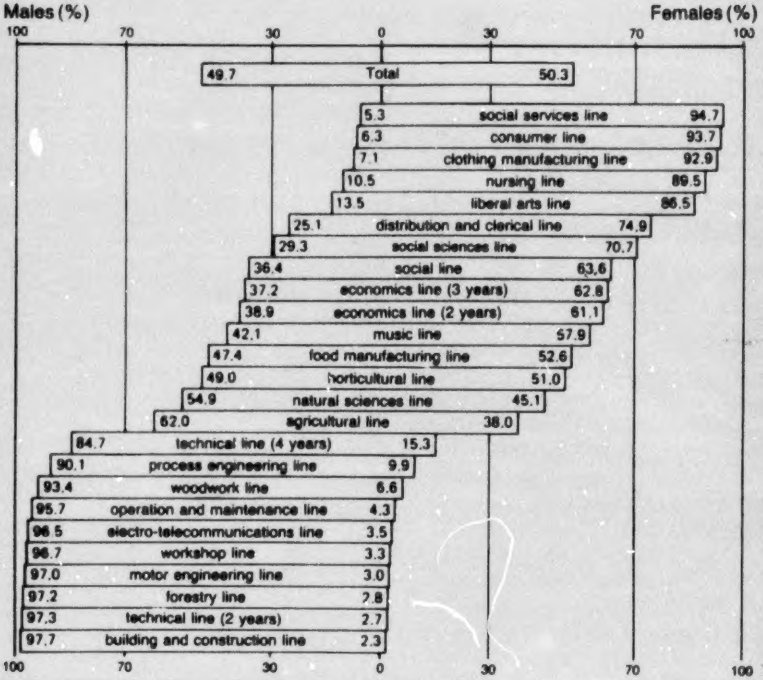
Equal numbers of girls and boys apply for upper secondary school, but the balance of the sexes in the different lines is very uneven (see chart below). Great efforts are made through the medium of educational and vocational orientation and practical working life orientation to induce girls and boys to make their educational and vocational decisions independently of traditional sexual stereotypes. But the latter are still too powerful. True, Sweden has a reputation for parental legislation allotting men and women equal rights and obligations towards children of all ages, but in practice the main responsibility for the running of the home usually rests with the woman. It is the mother who stays at home during the child's first year of life. And it is the mother who, more often than the father, has to look after the children when they are ill. In well-educated families there may perhaps be more equality between the sexes than in less privileged surroundings. Parents in such families tend more often to share responsibilities and parental leave.

It is true that women in Sweden are entitled on the same terms as men to obtain whichever job or appointment they are qualified for. In practice, though, women are at a disadvantage because they have had to devote more time to the family, because they have not received the same amount of education as men or, quite simply, because circumstances have made them less self-confident than men. Or, worse still, because an employer cannot imagine hiring a woman for that particular job. True, we have an Equal Opportunities Ombudsman whose task is to enforce the equality of the sexes at work. But by no means all cases of women being unfairly passed over for promotion are reported to the Ombudsman.

Many of the factors impeding schools in their pursuit for sexual equality are of an extraneous nature. One very powerful factor of this kind is the labour market. Women are more vulnerable than men. They often work in sectors which are subject to heavy cyclical fluctuations, e.g. the textile and clothing industry, hotels and restaurants. Or else they have jobs which can easily be rationalised out of existence, e.g. the routine jobs which in industry are now being taken over by robots, or else office work and jobs in retail trade or public administration which have been taken over by electronics. Girls are definitely in the majority among jobless youngsters. Young immigrant women have the very highest unemployment rate—several times more than the average for young persons under 25 in Sweden.

This gloomy picture of inequalities between girls and boys, women and men, immigrants and native Swedes, however, should not be taken to mean that efforts to achieve equality have come to a standstill. The process continues, but it is proving longer than people expected it to and too many of the problems are located outside schools. Far greater efforts will therefore have to be made in the community at large if schools are to make any headway in this respect.

Students in upper secondary school by study line and sex, autumn term, 1983



Source: Statistics Sweden

The efficiency of Swedish schools in an international context

It has sometimes been asserted, and is still asserted in some quarters, that educational achievement in Swedish schools has deteriorated considerably since the system of parallel schools was abolished and compulsory school classes were made undifferentiated. This, it is argued, penalises the most talented pupils, who are presumed to achieve less in the new school system. This assumption is not corroborated by the comparative studies which have been made of earlier and more recent generations of pupils in Sweden and of Swedish pupils and pupils at similar levels in other countries.

A number of surveys has been conducted since the beginning of the 1960s with the aim of devising international standards for the appraisal of teaching results in different countries. These surveys have been conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), and they now include upwards of 20 countries.

One of the reports has the following to say concerning the aims and strategy of the surveys: "The general and overriding purpose of the surveys has been to chart and measure factors accounting for differences of school achievement between national school systems and between schools and pupils within those systems. Some of the questions which it was desired to investigate were the way in which the social, economic and educational conditions of different countries influenced pupils' knowledge and attitudes, the extent to which the school structure itself, e.g. early or late differentiation, influences the standard of knowledge, and the effect of social background on school career and school achievements. It has not been the primary purpose of the project to compare the success of pupils in one country with that of pupils in other countries." In other words, this project is not an educational Olympics.

The achievement figures obtained through the IEA surveys are raw material which can be processed to broaden the cognitive data on which planners and decision-makers can base decisions concerning their own educational system.

The IEA carried out a mathematics survey between 1962 and 1966 and surveys of science subjects, reading comprehension, literature, English as a foreign language, French as a foreign language, and civics, the material for which was mostly collected during the early 1970s. Work on a second mathematics survey was launched at the beginning of the 1980s. Processing of the material from this survey has only just begun, but it is already apparent that the mathematics achievements of Swedish pupils have not declined since the survey of the 1960s.

The principal age groups studied comprise 10-year-olds, 14-year-olds and pupils in the terminal grade of upper secondary school and continuation school or their counterparts. National studies, in Sweden and elsewhere, have also included the final grade of compulsory school.

None of the surveys presents any evidence to show that Swedish pupils do less well educationally than comparable pupils in other countries. In terms of average results for the terminal grades of upper secondary school and continuation school, i.e. grades in which pupils complete their last year of school before possibly going on to higher education, Sweden comes above the average achievement level for the participating countries, in spite of the pupils in these grades constituting 45% of their year in Sweden as against 9–12% in most of the other countries taking part. If the comparison is restricted to the "best" 9% of pupils, Sweden comes top in many cases and always well above the average achievement level.

The summary of the Swedish report on the science subjects survey notes drily that "Swedish school standards in science subjects, measured by the tests employed here, are on roughly the same level as in other industrialised countries in Europe and elsewhere". One "cannot help being struck by the equal status of the industrialised nations in cognitive respects". "This survey (science subjects and reading comprehension) provides no evidence to show that the average level of knowledge at any level . . . is definitely lower in Sweden than in other comparable countries. Nor is there any evidence to support the contrary view."

One important observation concerning Swedish schools is that the standard of cognitive achievement is nationally uniform, in fact the most consistent in any participating country, while the results achieved by individual pupils vary a great deal within individual schools (see also p. 22).

It may be interesting to focus particularly on the civics survey. Cognitively, Swedish pupils did particularly well in this survey. The survey also included a number of attitude questions. For example, a study was made of pupils' attitudes concerning equal rights for women and the equality of different groups in society. In both respects the Swedish pupils displayed the most positive attitude among all those taking part. At the same time one finds that Swedish pupils do not feel that they experience equality in the classroom, either in the teachers' treatment of them or the way in which they themselves co-operate at school. The survey also shows that, by international standards, Swedish pupils take a very positive view of freedom of thought and expression, but that they do not by any means consider this freedom to have been achieved in the classroom. The conclusion drawn in the report is that "if the classroom climate could be improved as regards liberty of thought and expression, this could be expected to have substantially positive effects on school satisfaction and motivation". The survey material was collected in 1971. Since then, great efforts have been made to encourage the process of democratisation in schools, and a good deal of headway has been made in this respect in many places. Pupils are now in a position to influence the climate in their classrooms and schools, if they wish to do so.

Appendix 1

State-run institutions of higher education

Stockholm higher education region
Stockholm University
The Royal Institute of Technology
The Karolinska Institutet
The Stockholm School of Education
The National College of Dance
The Institute of the Dramatic Arts
The National College of Graphic Design and Public Relations and Advertising
The National College of Art and Design
The National College of Fine Arts
The National College of Music Drama
The National College of Music
The National College of Speech and Drama

Uppsala higher education region
Uppsala University
Eskilstuna/Västerås University College
Falun/Borlänge University College
Gävle/Sandviken University College
Örebro University College

Linköping higher education region
Linköping University
Jönköping University College

Lund/Malmö higher education region
Lund University
Halmstad University College
Kalmar University College
Kristianstad University College
Växjö University College

Göteborg higher education region
Göteborg University
Chalmers Institute of Technology
Borås University College
Karlstad University College
Skövde University College

Umeå higher education region
Umeå University
Luleå University College and Institute of Technology
Sundsvall/Härnösand University College
Östersund University College

Nationwide
The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Appendix 2

General and supplementary study programmes in higher education

The scope of a given study programme is measured using a credit system. One credit is equivalent to one week of full-time study. One academic year thus consists of 40 credits.

Technical sector

General programmes	*Credits*
Aeronautical engineering	160
Agriculture	220
Applied physics and electrical engineering	160
Architecture	160
Biology	60
Chemical engineering	160
Chemistry	120
Civil engineering	160
Computer science and technology	160
Construction industry	160
Control and maintenance	80
Earth sciences	60
Electrical engineering	160
Engineering industry	60
Engineering physics	160
Environmental planning and design	160
Farm management	40
Fishery sciences and management	80
Food industry	60
Forest management	60
Forest studies	65
Forestry	200
Geotechnology	160
Horticulture	220
Industrial and management engineering	160
Landscape architecture	220
Marine engineering	80
Marine radio-communications	60
Materials technology	160
Mathematics	120
Mechanical engineering	160
Metallurgy and materials technology	120

	Credits
Nautical science	80
Paper and pulp industry	40
Park and market garden management	40
Physics	120
Public health and environmental protection	120
Sawmill industry	60
Steel industry	60
Surveying	160
Textile engineering	80
Vehicle industry	60
Wood industry	60

Supplementary programmes

Control and maintenance	80
Marine engineering	40
Nautical science	40

Administrative, economic and social welfare sector

General programmes

Automatic data processing	40
Behavioural sciences and personnel management	120
Business administration and economics	120
Commerce and marketing	60
Financial management	80
Food science and economics	100
Law	180

	Credits
Local government administration	140
Psychology	200
Public administration	140
Social science	120
Social work	140
Systems analysis	120
Transportation planning and management	80
Urban and regional planning	140

Supplementary programmes

Dietetics	20
Food administration	20
Psychology	80
Social work	20

Nursing and care sector

General programmes

Audio-technology	80
Community care	100
Dental hygiene	40
Dentistry	40
Dispensing pharmacy	80/40
Health and medical care	80/90
Medical radiology	90
Medicine	220
Occupational therapy	120

	Credits
Pharmacy	160
Physiotherapy	100
Speech pathology and therapy	120
Veterinary medicine	180
Supplementary programmes	
Anaesthetics nursing and intensive care nursing	40
Blood group serology	6
Clinical cytology	24
Obstetrics and gynaecology	50
Orthoptics	40
Paediatric nursing	40
Psychotherapy	90
Public health nursing	40

Teaching sector

General programmes	*Credits*
Art education	120
Careers education (educational and vocational orientation)	120
Child welfare (child care) education	120
Commercial and clerical education	40
Craft education	40
Folk high school education	40
History and social science education	160
Home economics education	120
Immigrant languages education	80
Languages education	160
Music education	160
Nursery and infant (pre-school) education	100
Nursing education	60
Physical education teaching	80
Primary education (junior level)	100
Primary education (intermediate level)	120
Recreation and leisure education	100
Scientific subjects education	160
Skilled trades education	40
Textile craft education	120
Supplementary programmes	
Agricultural education	20
Special education for remedial teachers	20/100
Teaching methods for pre-school teachers, recreation instructors and child care teachers	20

Cultural and informational sector

General programmes	*Credits*
Advertising and public relations	60
Applied arts and crafts	170
Church music	160
Dance and movement	120
Design	170
Divinity	140

	Credits
Drama	140
Environmental art	200
Film, broadcasting and drama production	80/120
Graphic design	80
Graphic design for illustration	170
Humanities	120
Industrial design	170
Interior architecture	170
Interpreting	60
Journalism	80
Librarianship	80
Media studies	40

	Credits
Mime	120
Music	160
Music drama	140
Painting, sculpture and graphic art	200
Photography	120
Textile design	170
Three-dimensional design	170
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